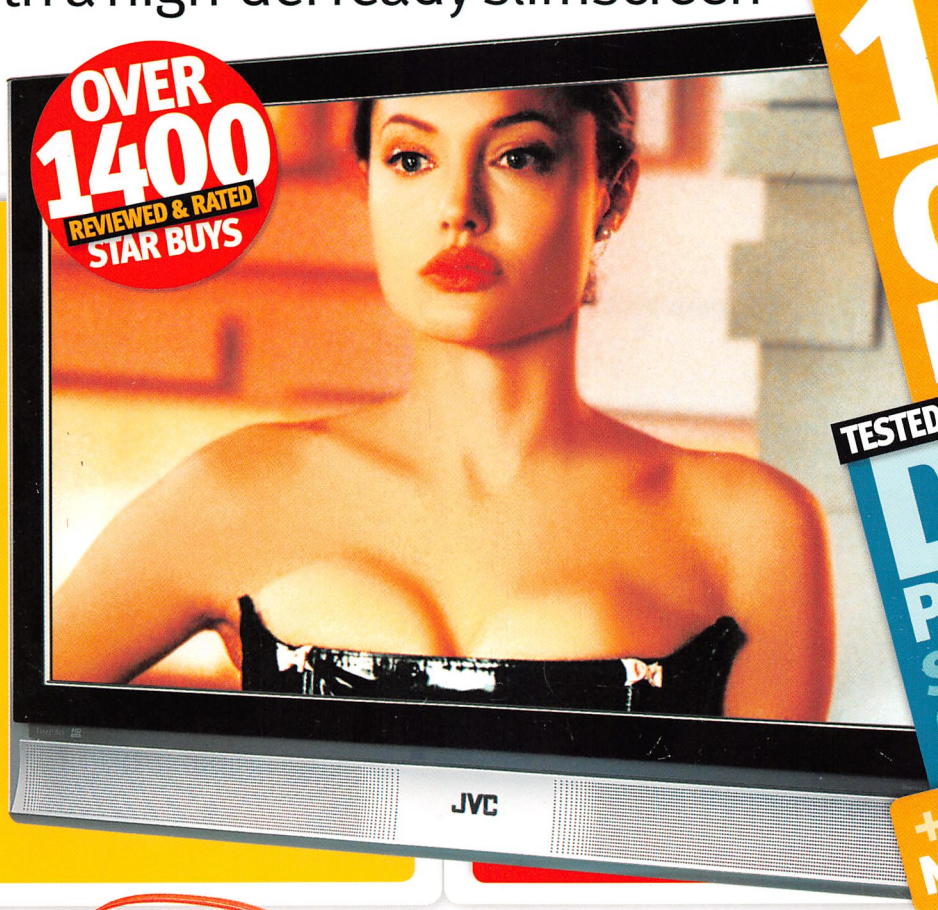
WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION

The world's No.1 home entertainment magazine

FLATSCREEN TV SUPERSTARS

Fall in love with a high-def ready slimscreen

OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED STAR BUYS



101 GIFT IDEAS

TESTED DVD PLAYERS SURROUND SOUND

+ MEET SKY'S NEW GNOME!

JUKEBOX YOUR HI-FI

Get your party started with non-stop MP3

DAB RADIO MEGATEST!

very size, colour and ost –find your ideal igital radio inside

HEAR MORE IN 2006

Eight hot systems your CDs have been waiting for

JANUARY 2006 £3.90

haymarket

HI-FI HOME CINEMA TV MP3 SMART BUYING MADE EASY!

a Cyrus system is not just for Christmas
– it's for life!

Our audio systems sound really amazing at Christmas
— you could ask Archie, but he is a dog and the headphones were Photoshop'd in by the photographer

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CD PLAYERS
CYRUS CD6s

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CD PLAYERS
BEST CD PLAYER £1000-£1500
CYRUS CD8x

CYRUS

cyrusaudio.com

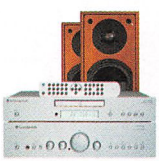
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
The world's No.1 home entertainment magazine

Trusted by over 1,000,000 readers every month

This month

So long 2005, hello 2006 – and we're starting on a high (definition) note. This year we'll at last join the US and Japan in being able to enjoy the latest sports, drama and films in glorious high-def detail – and true surround sound, too. While we're impatiently waiting for Sky's HDTV service **p32**, we'll be testing as many HD-Ready LCDs, plasmas and projectors as we can get our hands on **p40**, so your home is ready for this TV revolution.

From high-def to hi-fi, where there's plenty of new gear for the New Year.



Let our one-make hi-fi systems test **p54** tempt you into treating your CDs to something more special, then find out how to hook your hi-fi into the world of MP3 **p82** – without wires if you want.

Finally, if you're looking for last-minute gift ideas – or inspiration for January sales shopping – we've tested a bumper crop of affordable extras, from DAB radios **p70**, to a sanity-saving £5 stand **p80**. Happy New Year!

CLARE NEWSOME, EDITOR clare.newsome@haynet.com

WHY WE'RE NO.1...

OUR TESTS ARE CONDUCTED IN DEDICATED FACILITIES
Our suite of test rooms is respected the world over, and every product is reviewed in them by our team of experts.

WE'RE COMPLETELY IMPARTIAL
Every verdict is that of the magazine, not an advertiser or press officer. When we say something's good, it is.

YOU CAN TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE
We have nearly 30 years of experience. We've seen great products come and go, and know a flash in the pan when we see one.

WE SPOT THE BIG TRENDS FIRST
We have a proven track record of being first to spot the big trends, from CD to MP3.

DECEMBER 1999
MP3 COVER STORY
Testing MP3 players back when the iPod was just a twinkle in Apple's eye...

WE'VE GOT THE WORLD OF SOUND AND VISION COVERED
We're here to cover the world of sound and vision, from the latest flatscreens to the newest MP3 players. Find it all in every issue.

AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
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tvanswers@haynet.com
cinemaanswers@haynet.com
hifianswers@haynet.com
mp3answers@haynet.com

FLATSCREEN TV SUPERSTARS
Can't quite squeeze a 42in flatscreen into your living room? Don't despair: 37in sets can offer the same high-def-ready benefits in an even-more svelte package. We test seven on **p40**

DAB RADIO MEGATEST!
Looking for a portable digital radio? Look no further than our biggest-ever round-up of DAB delights– 16 models priced from just £40 **p70**

JUKEBOX YOUR HI-FI
Make more of your MP3 collection by hooking it up to your hi-fi – we show you the best formats, kit and connections to use **p82**

HEAR MORE IN 2006
An awesome £500 wonder heads our test of the latest one-make hi-fi systems **p54**

"So, we're chuffed with the sound, and we're equally happy with build. The handsome Primare electronics feel like they've been chiselled from a single meteorite, while the ProAc towers feel super-solid. You'll love this system... we know you will!" ONE-MAKE HI-FI SYSTEMS, p94

Contents

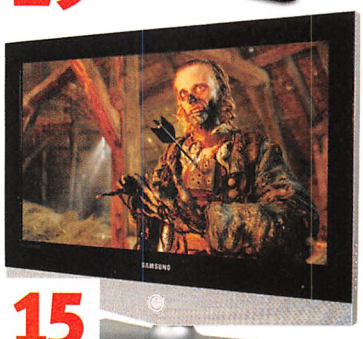
FIRST TESTS page 8

13 pages of verdicts on the very latest hardware

including Sony's latest DVD recording sensation; Perstel's do-it-all MP3 player and DAB radio portable; Samsung's electrifying LCD television; Pro-ject's cunning upgrade to the classic Debut, plus much, much more...

08

29



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SUPERTEST page 40

COVER STORY **37IN LCD TVs**

Seven gorgeous flatscreens with a size that makes big-screen for smaller rooms £1250 – £2800

GROUP TESTS

One-make hi-fi page 54

COVER STORY £500 – £7805

A system for every pocket to bring your CDs back to life

DAB radios page 70

COVER STORY £40 – £150

This season's must-have give you more quality and choice

MP3 your hi-fi page 82

COVER STORY £299 – £899

Top tips, tricks, and products to pipe MP3 through your hi-fi

TEST EXPRESS

Speaker stands page 90

£80 – £399

Transform the sound of your speakers for a modest cost

TEMPTATIONS page 100

World's most desirable kit

A Pathos multichannel valve amp that'll have you weeping with joy – along with heart-stopping kit from AE and Cairn

54

70

BEST BUYS page 30
What's hottest in hi-fi and home cinema – at a glance

INSTANT EXPERT page 50
MP3 players are this century's favourite way to hear music on the move

SOUND ADVICE
Our team of experts answers your queries on TVs, home cinema, hi-fi and MP3 page 104

NEWS page 32
NEXT MONTH page 37

BUYER'S GUIDE page 115
Every month our BUYER'S GUIDE features verdicts, specs and prices on over 1400 products. It's the buyers' bible, distilling years of WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION know-how into an easily mined resource. Updated every month – it's all you'll need.

SUBSCRIPTIONS page 38
GLOSSARY page 226
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OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED PRODUCTS

TESTED THIS MONTH

TVs & PROJECTORS

LCD TVs
Humax LGB-32TPVR £1600
Page 10
Loewe Spheros R26 £1850
Page 20
Mogen ML-1508TN £170
Page 80
Samsung LE32R41BD £1100
Page 15
JVC LT37DS6 £2100
LG RZ-37LZ31 £1800
Page 42
Philips 37PF9830 £2800
Page 43
Sharp LC-37GD7E £2400
Page 45
Sony KDL-V40A12U £2400
Page 23
Toshiba 37WLT58 £2100
Page 45
ViewSonic L3760W £1250
Page 46

PLASMA TVs
Panasonic TH-37PV500 £2300
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HOME CINEMA

ACCESSORIES
D Skin £7.50/5
EZC Remote Stand £5
Pure Link DC-DA1 £225
Page 80
Belkin RazorVision £199
Holdan Scart Router £89
Pure Link HDMI Switch £239
Page 81

DVD PLAYERS
Marantz DV7600 £600
Page 12
Pioneer DV-989AVi £850
Page 18
Toshiba SD-P2700 (portable) £300
Page 16

DVD RECORDERS
Philips DVDR3305 £150
Page 15
Sony RDR-HXD910 £700
Page 8

FREEVIEW BOXES
Ferguson FD1 Prism £50
Page 80

MULTICHANNEL AMPS & RECEIVERS
Arcam AVR250 £1000
Denon AVR-3806 £1000
Page 94
Pathos Cinema X £4750
Page 100
Pioneer VSX-AX4AVi £1000
Yamaha RX-V4600 £1000
Page 97

SPEAKER PACKAGES
Final HT80I/S80 £1535
Page 18

HI-FI

ACCESSORIES
Isotek Hi-Fi Rejuvenator £15
Keene Remote Distributor £40
Page 81

ACTIVE SPEAKERS
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Page 29
NHT M-00 £438
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AMPLIFIERS
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Cambridge 640A £250
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Creek Classic 5350SE £850
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Cyrus 8vs £850
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CD PLAYERS
Marantz CD5001 £180
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Roksan Kandy MkIII £650
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Cyrus CD6s £650
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Primare CD31 £1500
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Naim CDX2 £2800
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DAB RADIOS
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Dual ddab-01 £40
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Acoustic Solutions Portal 1 DAB £50
Intempo KT-01 £70
iTech iDAB Cube £69
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Bush TR2004 £80
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Genus Vero 1 £70
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Intempo RS-01 £89
Panasonic RF-D1 £99
Pure Evoke-1 XT £100
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Freeplay Devo £100
Roberts Gemini RD-27 £120
Sharp FV-DB2E £100
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Intempo KTM-02 £129
Pure Evoke-2 XT
Roberts RD50CFM £150
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SPEAKER STANDS
Custom Design RS300 £85
Partington Heavi £399
Quadraspire Q60 £98+
Russ Andrews Torlyte £299
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HARD DISK PLAYER
Cambridge Audio Azur 640H £600
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STEREO AMPLIFIERS
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Page 27
Roksan Kandy MkIII £650
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Primare I30 £1500
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STEREO SPEAKERS
Acoustic Energy Reference AE3 MkII £4490
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Mordaunt-Short Avant 902i £150
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Epos M5 £350
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KEF iQ5 £400
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Epos M12.2 £450
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Spendor S3e £795
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ProAc Studio 140 £1400
Page 63
ProAc Studio 110 £749
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Art Stiletto 6 £1950
Page 64
Dynaudio Focus 220 £1850
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TURNTABLES
Pro-ject Debut MkIII E £210
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MP3

CD-RIPPING SERVICE
CDLabs £75
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MP3 PLAYERS
Apple iPod £299
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iRiver U10 1GB £190
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MEDIA COMPUTER
Apple iMac G5 17in £899
Page 85

SPEAKER SYSTEM
Oregon Scientific iBall £200
Page 11

CON

CONSTANTLY ON THE PHONE
SHOPS WAY TOO MUCH
TERRIBLE COOK
HAIRY ARMPITS

PRO

OWNS A PAIR OF
CONCEPT SPEAKERS

FEATURES

- Wide Dispersion
- 3D Audio
- Time Coherence
- Amplifier Optimized

IN ADMIRATION OF MUSIC

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CONCEPT 6

Finding the right match is one of the most challenging tasks life will throw at you. If you find it hard to compromise, we recommend that you try a pair of our Concept speakers. You will soon discover that compromising does not necessarily mean losing out...

[Optional 7.1 system available]

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NEW THIS MONTH

TVs
Humax £1600
Page 10
Samsung £1100
Page 15
Loewe £1850
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Sony £2400
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STEREO SPEAKERS
Oregon Scientific £200
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ProAc £749
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NHT £438
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Opera £650
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Acoustic Energy £100
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TURNTABLE
Pro-ject £210
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UNIVERSAL PLAYER
Marantz £600
Page 12
Pioneer £850
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DVD RECORDER
Philips £150
Page 15

PORTABLE DVD PLAYER
Toshiba £300
Page 16

First Tests

PACKED WITH EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS OF HOT NEW KIT

Sony lifts the DVD recorder bar

DVD/HARD DISK RECORDER
SONY RDR-HXD910
★★★★☆
£ 700

FOR
Superb off-air picture; faultless recording in a range of modes; good disc compatibility; huge hard disk; brilliant HDMI performance

AGAINST
Might seem a little expensive to some

VERDICT
There's a new drawer in the DVD recorder cabinet; it's at the top, and you'll find the new Sony '910 inside – brilliant!

SONY IS FRESH from waltzing away with the DVD recorder Product of the Year in the 2005 Awards, thanks to the RDR-HXD710. All we could think to question was the absence of an HDMI output.

Predictably, the new '910 delivers just that, along with an even bigger hard disk, some new recording features and, happily, an all-round breathtakingly impressive performance.

Styling and menu layout are instantly recognisable as Sony's and, as expected, are simple to use. It's only a few seconds till we're scanning for channels on the built-in Freeview digital tuner.

A quality digital tuner is essential

The broadcast TV picture – the key to the quality of recordings – is sublime. Objects are rendered with fine sharpness, while the detail on show is class-leading. Colours are equally striking, with even the toughest of assignments given a stable, vivid image.

The standard of recordings only gives us more reasons to be cheerful. You can choose to record to either the roomy 250GB hard disk – allowing for 34 hours in the best-quality HQ+ mode or up to 428 hours in the lowest setting – or for something a little more permanent, any DVD disc under the sun barring DVD-RAM, but including dual-layer DVD+R discs. Doing so is easy using the eight-day electronic programme guide.

Inside this unassuming silver box there's a 250GB hard disk and a state-of-the-art HDMI connection

The HQ+ mode certainly gives you a nigh-on faultless level of hard-disk recording quality. Pleasingly, the next three modes are all as good, with only a slight softening of edges creeping into pictures. Drop down to LP mode and below and you'll find a certain amount of blocking, noise and – eventually – unwanted juddering. This is fairly common with DVD/Hard Disk recorders, so limit the amount you cram in.

The cherry on this already-tasty cake is the inclusion of an HDMI output. Aside from a Pioneer machine costing nearly twice the price, this is the first recorder we've seen with the hallowed HDMI logo. The picture in both 720p and 1080i processing modes does the fanfare justice, delivering an image capable of dealing smoothly with the blackest of action scenes in *Batman Begins*, as well as the rich colours served up by *Fantastic Four*. The performance available from both the component and RGB scart connections is excellent, but not up to the HDMI standard.

"Add up all the positives and you realise this is *the* DVD recorder to possess..."

Sound quality with HDMI is worthy of note, too. Sound is detailed and dynamic when receiving off-air TV signals (notably more so than rivals): shift to DVD replay, and audio simply takes a noticeable leap up in quality, as you'd expect. If you have a multichannel surround system, you'll be more than happy with this Sony as your DVD unit.

KNOW HOW UPGRADES

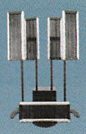
It's a busy backplate on the Sony, but that's good news for quality

THE RDR-HXD910 IS only the second DVD recorder we've seen that includes an HDMI output for digital video and audio transfer. Pictures from the tuner, hard-disk drive and DVD discs are relayed in either 576p (PAL) or 480p (NTSC) format on compatible displays. The HDMI socket can also be used to send either stereo audio (into, say, a TV) or complete 5.1 multichannel movie audio (into a suitable surround receiver), making your connections very simple.

However, unlike the Pioneer's HDMI-enabled recorder, the DVR-920H, this '910 can also upscale video to 720p and 1080i resolution, making it the first recorder we've seen with HDMI and video-scaling capabilities.

JARGON BUSTER

HDMI: The best way (along with compatible DVI-D) of connecting DVD recorder and TV.



SPEAKER PACKAGE
Final £1535
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CD RIPPING SERVICE
CDlabs £75
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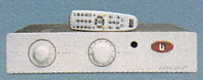
MULTIMEDIA PLAYER
iRiver U10 £190
Page 24



STEREO AMPLIFIER
Unison £750
Page 27

HI-FI RACK
Partington £389
Page 29

MP3 PLAYER/DAB RADIO
Perstel £150
Page 29

TECH SPECS

PLAYS DVD-Video, DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, CD-R/-RW, MP3
RECORDS DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW, dual-layer DVD+R
HARD DISK 250GB
INPUTS RGB Scart, S-Video
OUTPUTS HDMI, component, Scart, S-Video, composite
DIGITAL AUDIO OUTPUTS Coaxial, optical
PROGRESSIVE SCAN Yes
HDMI OUTPUT 720p/1080i upscaling
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 7 x 43 x 33cm
WEIGHT 5kg

And that's the crunch with the RDR-HXD910. Add up all the positives and you realise this is a recorder that does everything you require, both in terms of recording and playback. The welcome addition of an HDMI connection – that performs brilliantly – coupled with the high standard of picture through the digital tuner, means this is now undoubtedly the new benchmark for digital video recorders. Let's see what the competition can do.

Sony must be used to creating class-leading DVD recorders by now, because we're getting used to testing them!

NOW ADD THESE

SPEAKER PACKAGE
MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV
★★★★★
£1900
This potent Monitor Audio multichannel package is attractive in every sense – it delivers superlative sound quality with stereo and multichannel signals.

PLASMA SCREEN
PIONEER PDP-436XDE
★★★★★
£2800
If a stunning big-screen picture is what you're after, then look no further than this superlative Pioneer. It's HD-ready, and has a brilliant image via HDMI.

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
YAMAHA RX-V4600
★★★★★
£1000
We're pairing the Sony player/recorder with some of the finest products around. Power and precision from this Yammy.

TOTAL SYSTEM £6400

Slimline set can record TV, too

32in LCD TV/HARD-DISK RECORDER
HUMAX LGB-32TPVR
★★★★☆
£1600

FOR
Comprehensive, HD-ready spec, decent build and finish; picture looks good with a digital signal

AGAINST
Off-air quality is nothing special; a trial to set up

VERDICT
By no means perfect, but this set is about as convenient and effective as we have encountered

This 32in flat TV is HD-ready and conceals a 40GB hard-disk recorder. Clever stuff, Humax

IF YOU STUMBLED across it in a shop, you might easily dismiss this Humax as another in a long line of LCD flatscreens produced by a manufacturer you're unfamiliar with. True, you might spend a moment admiring its clean, unobtrusive cabinet, but if you don't investigate further, you'll overlook a worthwhile, thoughtful piece of equipment. There's more to the LGB-32TPVR than meets the average shopper's restless eye.

Inside its tidy, well-assembled cabinet, the Humax houses both analogue and digital TV tuners, as well as a 40GB hard-disk drive. In common with Freeview tuners and DVD recorders with hard disks, the LGB-32TPVR can record off-air broadcasts to a high quality without any type of discs or tapes.

In fact, this Humax television is good for up to 44 hours' recording, which should be enough for most viewers to cope with in one sitting.

Two remotes for the price of one

Once out of the box and connected via an RF aerial, the Humax tunes to every available digital and analogue station with alacrity. Getting to the point where the screen is ready to tune is a bit of a rigmarole – Humax wins no prizes for the simplicity of its install menus – but once the screen is set up to your satisfaction, one of the two remote controls provided with the LGB-32TPVR can be put away safely. Humax thoughtfully provides a couple of handsets: one comprehensive device that covers all eventualities, and a smaller remote for everyday functionality.

The standard of off-air reception is acceptable, but little more. There is picture noise apparent in more open, testing scenes, and some minor problems with edge-definition. Even after a thorough and painstaking set-up, colours can remain a little lurid. Motion is tracked confidently, though, and contrast levels are impressive. HQ is – surprise – the highest-quality setting for the hard-disk recorder, and copies made at this level of compression remain very faithful to the off-air signal.

Quality means less capacity

You can double the amount of material your hard-disk will hold by using the SP setting, and the drop-off in quality is negligible. It's only the maxed-out LP ratio that should be avoided – pictures become alive with artefacts and digital noise. Saying that, there's vague, but discernable, noise whenever the hard disk is in use.

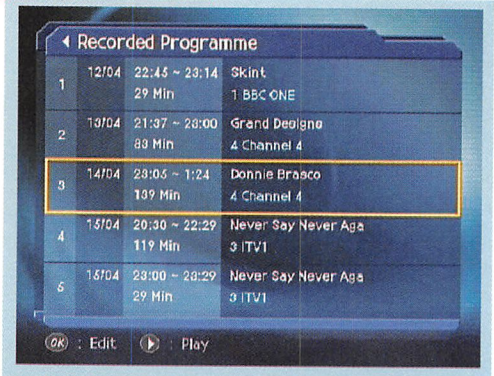
DVDs played through the RGB Scart input are on the gloomy side:

"When it comes to sheer convenience, it'd be hard to do better than this"

Batman Begins is too dark, with little detail in the murky scenes and diffident contrast. A switch to the DVI input reveals far better contrast, allowing lighting and colours to look far more natural. The LGB-32TPVR gives of its best when playing DVDs through the digital input, when it appears nicely poised, stable and virtually free from picture noise.

So, it's not just another flatscreen TV. In terms of ergonomics and sheer convenience, you'd be hard pushed to do better than this HD-ready Humax. Of course, we're here to tell you that a nice 32in LCD (say, Toshiba's 32WL56) and a Freeview tuner/PVR, such as DigiFusion's FVRT200, will cost less money and offer superior results, but that's to miss the point somewhat. The Humax LGB-32TPVR is an efficient, convenient solution.

KNOW HOW **EASY RECORDING**



Say bye-bye to setting your video the fiddly way. Today's electronic programme guides (EPGs) list forthcoming TV shows on your screen (up to a week ahead for this Humax). Just click on the shows you want to be recorded.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

TOSHIBA 32WL56
★★★★★
£1200
Awards 2005
This is our favourite high-value 32in LCD television. It doesn't have a hard-disk built-in, so match it with...

DIGIFUSION FVRT200
★★★★★
£180
Awards 2005
...this Freeview tuner and 80GB hard disk. It gives a great picture, and is the electronic programme guide makes it easy to use

TECH SPECS

SCREEN SIZE 32in
ASPECT RATIO 16:9
RESOLUTION 1366 x 768
CONTRAST RATIO 1000:1
PROGRESSIVE SCAN PAL, NTSC
INPUTS DVI-D, component, Scart, S-Video, RGB Scart, composite, PC, USB
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 60 x 83 x 23cm
WEIGHT 25kg

iPOD SPEAKER
OREGON SCIENTIFIC iBALL
★★☆☆☆
£ 200

FOR
Looks great; wireless feature works well; good connectivity

AGAINST
Sounds very poor for a £200 system

VERDICT
The wireless feature is a neat touch, but its core function – sounding good – just isn't there

iBall should be seen not heard

ROLLING INTO VIEW this month comes Oregon Scientific's innovative iBall. Aimed at owners of the whitest must-have item since sliced bread, the iBall is a fine proposition – in theory. You get a receiver with built-in speakers, plus a docking station/wireless transmitter. That's right, this funky-looking system operates without wires. Simply

"Music sounds muddled and insubstantial: there is bass but little detail"

plug your iPod into the dock, and tunes fire across to the speaker unit located up to 30m away.

The receiver uses six C-cell batteries that are good for around six hours of wireless use. You can also power it via the mains. Control buttons on the speaker ball and a basic, backlit display allow you to control your iPod without getting up.

The chunky dock comes with a selection of different iPod adapters, while one for a Shuffle costs £6. Cradles for the new iPod video and nano will be available in January.

Connection-wise, the dock has auxiliary input and output, plus an iPod socket for hooking up to your computer's iTunes. There's even an S-Video output for your television.

If only the performance wasn't so weak. Music sounds muddled and insubstantial: the Jackson 5's *ABC* is a mish-mash of vocals and instruments, with little separation or clarity. Bass has been pumped up to compensate for the lack of detail.

The iBall is a fine concept, and the wireless feature works very well, but for £200 you can get a speaker system that kicks this into touch.

The iBall ticks plenty of boxes: it looks funky, has lots of connections and it's wireless, but sadly it sounds poor

ALSO CONSIDER

MONITOR AUDIO I-DECK
★★★★★
£250
December 2005
It's not exactly portable, but the i-deck is by far the best docking system we've heard to date

ALTEC LANSING iM7
★★★★☆
£200
December 2005
Think of the iM7 as a boom-box for your iPod. It's fully portable, and offers hefty bass by the barrel-load

TURNTABLE
PRO-JECT
DEBUT MKIII E
★★★★☆
£ 210

FOR
Ease of use and set-up; fine sound quality; decent build

AGAINST
Hefty price increase over the standard Debut

VERDICT
This is as capable as any other Debut, but the price hike is big enough to lose it that fifth star

Nice and E-asy says Pro-ject

RECORD DECKS AREN'T necessarily about convenience: people buy them for sound quality, and are willing to put up with the hassles that go with the format.

Look after your vinyl

Do you need examples? You have to treat your discs with more care than your first-born to ensure they have a decent lifespan, and pamper the turntable with a decent support just so that it can do its job properly. And finally, there's always that run back to the record player when you've realised the cartridge has kerr-chunked in the run-out groove for the last 10 minutes while you popped to the kitchen for a cuppa.

The last of these problems is a thing of the past if you buy the

"You have to treat your vinyl records with more care than your firstborn"

latest version of Pro-ject's excellent Debut Mk III. The 'E', as it's known, looks like every other version of this superb (and multiple Award-winning) budget player, but stops its platter spinning once the end of side has been reached, lifting the cartridge up out of harm's way at the same time.

It's done using an optical sensor to detect when the cartridge, in this case a Ortofon OM 5E, has reached the run-out groove, setting off various switches that trigger the motor and tonearm lift.

Great detail and soundstage

When it comes to sound quality, this version is identical to any other Pro-ject Debut MkIII. That means you're rewarded with a cohesive musical presentation that delivers a decent amount of detail and fine dynamics. The Debut is as happy with Nick Cave's mellifluous *Wonderful Life* as it is the grander and more dynamically challenging *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff.

So far so good, yet this deck costs a good £80 more than a basic Debut MkIII, which is a fair chunk money for a convenience feature. Or you might choose the Debut SB, which has a switch to change platter speed. You can't have both.

Convenience costs: the 'E' version loses a star for being £80 more than the Debut III

ALSO CONSIDER

PRO-JECT DEBUT MKIII
★★★★★
£130
December 2004
This the basic version of the Debut: it's a truly stellar performer, and is fantastic value

GOLDRING GR2
★★★★★
£265
May 2005
Costs more than the Debut MkIII E, but sounds better in most respects. No automated functions, though

Marantz is a music player first

UNIVERSAL PLAYER
MARANTZ
DV7600
★★★★☆
£ 600

FOR
Fine, natural colours and depth of field; engagingly musical; usual Marantz unburstable build

AGAINST
Pictures are soft, and the scaler softens them further

VERDICT
An unusual emphasis from a 'universal' disc player – this is almost a CD player with the knack of playing DVDs too

THERE ARE SOME universal disc players that really can do the job of a DVD player and a CD player in one box. Not many, mind you – the majority of universal spinners, at all price-points, are compromised in some way – typically when playing music. So does Marantz's new universal player prove to be the exception or the rule?

Marantz's DV7600 has certainly got the on-paper specification right: HDMI output, video scaling, 216MHz/12-bit video DACs, and 192kHz/24-bit multichannel DACs are the headlines, along with the ability to play about any shiny disc around. PAL/NTSC progressive scan and hefty-going-on-battleship build quality won't put anyone off, either. It's also an aggressive £100 cheaper than the best-in-class Yamaha DVD-S2500 player.

Super specs for the money

Set-up is straightforward enough, thanks to a remote control and on-screen menus that are mercifully logical and easy to get to grips with.

Loading *Star Wars: Episode III* into the smooth-sliding disc tray reveals everything there is to know about the DV7600's picture fidelity. You're greeted by an expansive colour palette, and transitions from inky, deep-space blackness to vivid, ultra-saturated reds and squint-inducing whites are without fuss.

Motion is tracked competently enough, with only the most violent movements provoking a hint of smearing, and depth of field is comparable to the best DVD players at this money. The DV7600 has some difficulties with detail, though: the overriding characteristic of the picture is its slight softness, even via HDMI. There's a

"It kicks other universal players to the kerb when it's time to play music..."

subtle, but definite, lack of rigour to edges, which is exacerbated by the Marantz's internal video-scaler – intricate patterns are constantly on the move, and very testing information (such as an opened zipper on a jacket) flummoxes the Marantz, provoking a fair amount of 'dot-crawl' with regularity.

The '7600 is more confident when it comes to making music. David Bowie's live *Stage* DVD-A is invested with pith and vinegar by the Marantz, the multichannel audio well-separated and simultaneously splendidly integrated. Low frequencies carry weight without becoming overbearing, and voices enjoy their own well-defined area of the soundstage in which to communicate.

Marantz's latest universal player is also available in a silver finish

Stereo music surprises

It's an undeniably musical and convincing presentation, and the Marantz carries that approach over intact to stereo music. Sparks's *(Baby, Baby) Can I Invade Your Country?* snaps along in fine style, well timed and expertly judged. The baroque flourishes don't overwhelm the organic flow of the song, and the timing is again notable for its toe-tapping immediacy.

So where most universal players demote musical ability to an afterthought, it's actually the DV7600's speciality: the Marantz can't compete with the above-mentioned Yamaha where DVD playback is appraised, but kicks it to the kerb where music is concerned. The DV7600 is no more a *truly* universal player than most competitors. It's a music player that's movie-ready.

KNOW HOW UNIVERSAL PLAYERS

Arcam's DV79 is our favourite near-universal player, though it can't play SACD discs

FOR OVER A year, we've considered Arcam's DV79 to be the best near-universal player around, largely because it sounds every bit as musical as its sibling CD73T CD player. For a £1000 DVD player to bear comparison with a £400 CD player from the same manufacturer is an achievement, but it illustrates the degree of compromise even the best of these machines demands.

There's no denying it: dedicated CD or DVD players offer better pound-for-pound performance than universal kit. A different compromise is demanded: extra equipment in your room, more power-points occupied, greater aggravation for your nearest and dearest. Which sacrifice can you cope with?

ALSO CONSIDER

YAMAHA DVD-S2500
★★★★★
£700
Awards 2005
Has an edge over the Marantz when it comes to DVD movies – fully deserved its Best in Class Award

DENON DVD-2910
★★★★★
£600
November 2004
Something of an old stager, but no less capable for it, the Denon is a fine all-rounder. Built like a brick outhouse, too

TECH SPECS

PLAYS DVD-Video, DVD-Audio, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/RW, SACD, HDCD, VCD, SVCD, WMA, MP3
VIDEO OUTPUTS HDMI, component, 2 x S-Video, RGB Scart, composite,
5.1 channel,
DIGITAL AUDIO OUTPUTS Optical, coaxial
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PROGRESSIVE SCAN PAL, NTSC
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WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

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WHAT HI-FI Awards 2005

March 2004

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

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Silver Reference Sqart

" The best Scart at this kind of money – buy with confidence"

WHAT HI-FI March 2004

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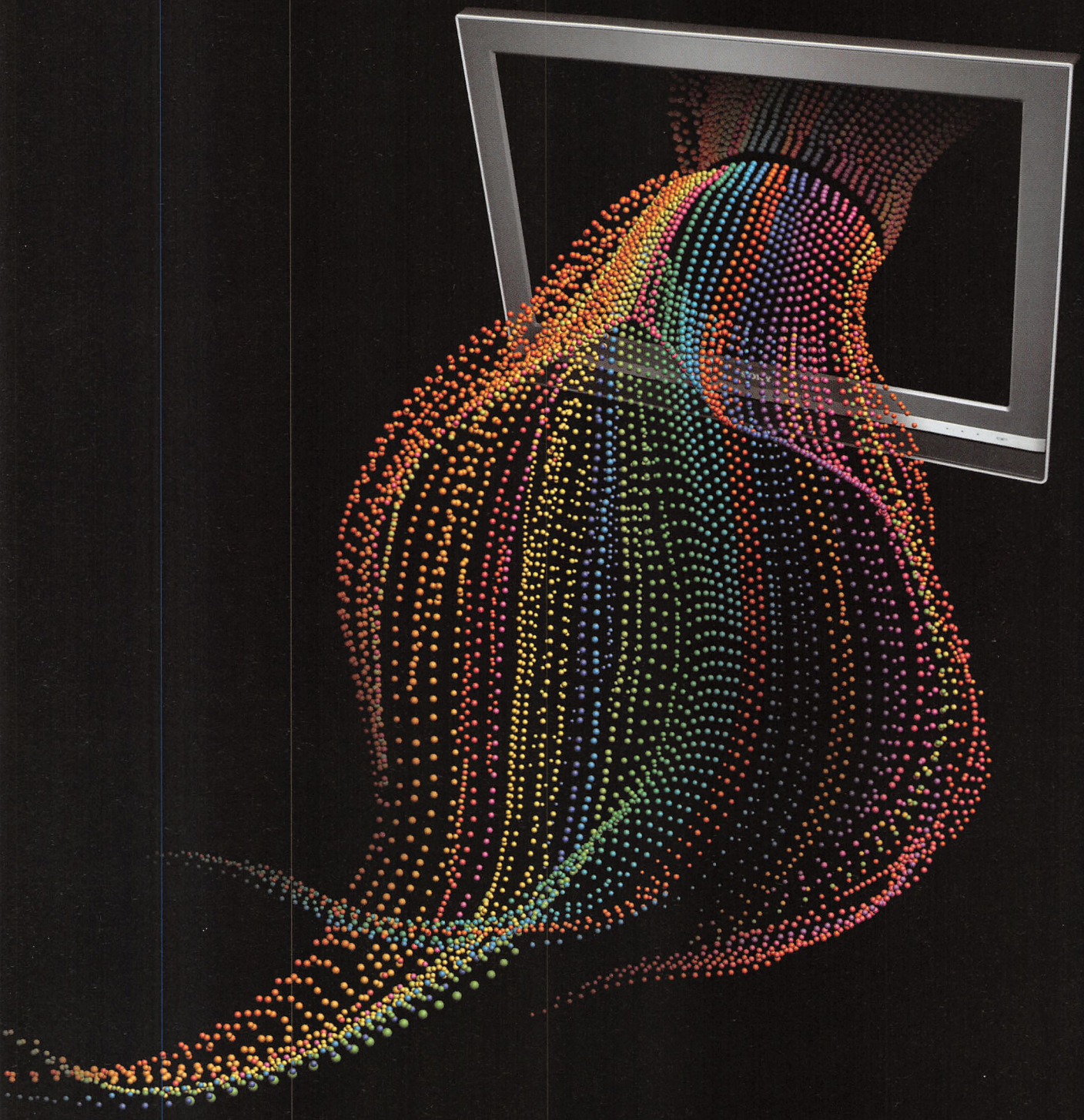

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HD ready

Colour like.no.other™

DVD RECORDER
PHILIPS
DVDR3305
★★★★★
£ 150

FOR
Excellent tuner gives crisp images; fine recordings; unexpectedly good as a DVD player; cheap!

AGAINST
Doesn't support dual-layer discs; that's it

VERDICT
A bargain of a deck, this is way better than typical budget fodder. Just buy one...

Who would have thought they'd get this cheap?

Philips is a cut-price superstar

TIME WAS YOU had to pay through the nose for a decent DVD recorder, especially if you wanted one from a 'brand name' – but not now.

An example? The first Philips recorder we tested, the DVDR1000, cost £1300 in 2002. It's amazing how times have changed: now, you can get a Philips for just £150 – and not only is it much cheaper than its forebear, it's also better, too.

The same but different

In fact, the new DVDR3305 is a minor miracle at its pricepoint. If you were considering picking up a DVD recorder from a supermarket, don't – not unless it's one of these, anyway. The Philips is just so much more confidence-inspiring than most budget kit: it's better-made, better-looking and easier to use, and it also delivers excellent results, in terms of both off-air recording and DVD playback.

The DVDR3305 also marks something of a departure for

"The Philips inspires so much more confidence than most budget kit"

Philips. It records to DVD+R/+RW discs – as you might expect, given Philips developed the format – but it can also use DVD-R/RW media. Guess someone has had a rethink.

No matter. More flexibility is always a good thing, and while the Philips won't support dual-layer blank DVDs, we won't be overly critical given the price. Besides, up to six hours of recording time is still on offer, although that's in the lowest quality mode: we'd stick to the standard two-hour mode to make the most of the DVDR3305's terrific analogue tuner and fine, RGB-Scart picture quality.

The real surprise is how well the DVDR3305 replays pre-recorded DVDs. The Philips is a very handy budget DVD player, with a stable, colourful picture that belies its lack of both component video outputs and progressive scan capability. It's yet another reason why this bargain buy should go straight to the top of your Christmas shopping list.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

GOODMANS GHDD177DVDR
★★☆☆☆
£199
December 2005
Includes an integrated 80GB hard disc and a reasonable array of sockets, but quality is poor

SONY RDR-GX210
★★★★☆
£200
December 2005
Largely fine, but ghosting on the picture is a blow

32IN LCD TV
SAMSUNG
LE32R41BD
★★★★☆
£ 1100

FOR
Build and styling belie the price; picture is very good, mostly

AGAINST
Lacks contrast adjustability to a frustrating degree

VERDICT
The list of positives is exhaustive, but contrast isn't on there; despite that, this is notable value for money

A fine picture, plus excellent build and easy set-up make this a solid flatscreen

Samsung on cusp of greatness

SLIPPED FROM ITS box, this Samsung 32in LCD television looks and feels a wee bit pricier than it is – there's a touch of the Loewe about its urbane styling. The specification sheet covers all the bases nicely: HD-ready, digital tuner, and all the useful socketry. The remote's a bit of a lump, but at least you don't have to squint at it. Once your TV's plugged in, the concise and logical set-up menus are good portents, too.

The tuner locates every available station in double-quick time, and presents a composed, well-defined

"Via analogue or digital connections, DVDs give super-cohesive images"

image. Colours are natural, and movement-tracking is dealt with as resolutely as the best flatscreens.

True, there's an occasional hint of shimmer around some complex edges, but the only meaningful flaw we could find concerns contrast. No matter how much you tweak it, dark scenes lack insight, despite the Samsung's claimed 800:1 contrast ratio.

However, via analogue or digital connections, the Samsung paints very cohesive images with DVDs, even if they, too, lack dark detail.

In every other respect, this TV is a strong contender: motion is steady, depth of field impressive, while noise is virtually non-existent.

Look again at the price and the build quality, and you'll understand our frustration with the picture: we could have been looking at an early Awards 2006 contender here.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

TOSHIBA 32WL56
★★★★★
£1200
November 2005
Smooth images, decent build and stacks of sockets make for corking value

SAGEM HD-L32
★★★★☆
£1200
November 2005
Well-priced and made, and offers decent images, especially via its HDMI input

PORTABLE DVD PLAYER
TOSHIBA SD-P2700
★★★★★
£ 300

FOR
Big screen; good pictures; long battery life; two headphone sockets; SD card slot to view your digital photos

AGAINST
Disc-tray cover feels flimsy

VERDICT
Deeply impressive for the money, this Toshiba player looks to be the best value around

Toshiba's portable sanity-saver

NOTHING ACTS FASTER on the tense, nervous headache that can result from a long car journey with young children than a portable DVD player. Forget ibuprofen, Toshiba's SD-P2700 will deal with your symptoms before they even start.

We'll get to the niceties: here are the practicalities. The SD-P2700 has a 9in screen – usefully large if

"If/when you can wrest it from the kids, you'll enjoy its performance"

the offspring aren't yet good at sharing. It sports two headphone sockets; handy for the same reason. The screen pivots through 180 degrees, which makes sitting in the 'sweet' spot easier, while the battery lasts a decent 3.5 hours: enough for one watch of *Heaven's Gate* or two of *Finding Nemo*. This sort of spec can get right to the source of the pain.

If/when you get it to yourself, you'll enjoy its dogged motion-tracking, its wide-ranging colour palette and distinct, if slightly lightweight, sound. You can't really fine tune the picture, so dark tones and murky scenes can lack detail. But edges are stable, skin tones are natural and there's even a game stab at establishing decent depth of field.

Take your movies with you with this superb Toshiba portable

On top of all that, the SD-P2700 is properly made (though the disc-tray cover could be sturdier), comes with a svelte remote control and can run off mains or your car's 12V outlet.

So, for harassed parents, bored commuters, frequent flyers or lovers of great-value gadgets, this Toshiba is more than just a placebo.

ALSO CONSIDER

TOSHIBA SD-P1600
★★★★★
£200
September 2005
'Only' a 7in screen but, in every other respect, this portable DVD player is just as good as the 'P2700

GOODMANS GDVD100WLCD
★★★★½
£250
UG MP3, Summer 2005
Solid build, solid picture quality; solid value

STEREO SPEAKERS
PROAC STUDIO 110
★★★★★
£ 749

FOR
Sparkling dynamics and superb timing; an entertaining presentation

AGAINST
Don't look particularly special for the money

VERDICT
In a suitably capable system these are about as musical as sub-thousand pound standmounts get

A must-listen pair from ProAc

THE MARKET FOR a pair of quality sub-£1000 standmounts hasn't been sparkling of late. Sure, there are the usual suspects – Ruark's Sabre IIIs and Dynaudio's Audience 52SEs have long been favourites of ours – but nothing special has come along for ages. Up until now that is: here's ProAc, all set to stir things up with its Studio 110s.

We've already raved about their big brothers, the floorstanding 140s

"Don't buy another sub-£1000 standmounter before you hear these"

(in fact we gave them a best-in-class Award), so we were expecting good things. As things turned out, they're even better than that.

Not that our first impressions were wholly positive. The finish and build are decent for the money, but compared to most rivals these boxes look plain. However, put the Studio 110s on something like Partington's £170 Super Dread noughts, well out into the room with a touch of toe-in, and they'll shine brighter than just about anything else at this price.

There's no one quality that grabs you first. The sound is just so good in so many areas that you'll find it difficult to sit back and analyse. And that's how it should be. These speakers are all about the music. The Studio 110s get out of the way, allowing the rest of the system to do its job unhindered.

Take it as read that detail resolution is good, and stereo imaging is pinpoint in the extreme. However, it's the ProAcs' vivid dynamics and ability to track rhythms that really sets them above the norm. Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* takes an unbreakable hold through these speakers, as does Kate Bush's multilayered *Aerial*.

We'd love to go on, but space has beaten us. Let's leave it at this then: if you want to be entertained, don't buy another sub-thousand pound standmounter before you hear the ProAc Studio 110s.

OK, so they look a little plain – but the ProAcs certainly sound special

ALSO CONSIDER

RUARK SABRE III
★★★★★
£899
June 2005
These are fast, communicative speakers, though a touch bright at the top end

SPENDOR S3e
★★★★★
£795
June 2005
If you value refinement and resolution give these delightful Spendors a go

The Komponent loudspeaker system from Linn.

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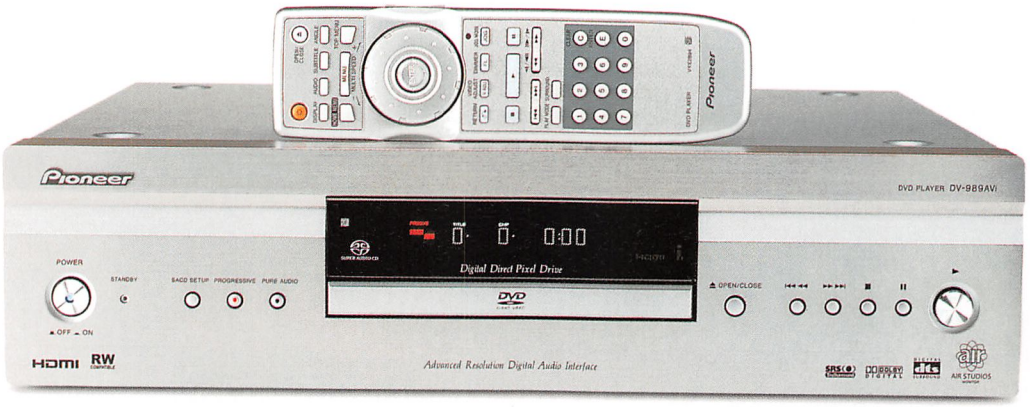
UNIVERSAL PLAYER • MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE

UNIVERSAL PLAYER
PIONEER
DV-989AVi
★★★★★
£ 850

FOR
Cracking picture quality; great spec, good build

AGAINST
Not all that musical

VERDICT
It looks the absolute business in picture terms, but it's nothing special musically, and shouldn't be considered a one-stop player



Pioneer hits new movie high

IT'S BEEN TWO years since we first looked at Pioneer's DV-868AVi, the exceptional unit this player replaces. We like to think the '989 has taken so long to arrive because Pioneer wanted to get every aspect of its performance spot-on.

We've no complaints where the picture is concerned. Price-wise, the Pioneer falls neatly between our 2005 Best-in-Class winners from Yamaha (DVD-S2500, £700) and Arcam (DV79, £1000) and comfortably outperforms them both in this area. With *Fantastic Four* spinning in the tray and the DV-989AVi connected via its HDMI output, pictures are as stable, solid and convincing as can be. Colours are natural and unforced, motion is tracked with zealous accuracy, contrast is by turns bold and subtle, and edges are smoother than a Tory leadership candidate. Depth of field is exemplary, skin tones utterly convincing and even big, uniform images are free of picture noise. This is the best sub-£1000 picture performance we've seen – by some margin.

"This is the best picture performance we've seen from a sub-£1000 unit"

Movie sound is as solid as you'd expect for this money, but it's a different story where music – stereo or multichannel – is concerned. The Pioneer sounds musically tentative and inhibited. It can't improve on its Yamaha rival, and lags behind the tuneful new Marantz DV-7600 (p12), and Arcam's sublime DV79.

If movies are your priority, you won't make a better buy for the money than this new Pioneer.

If you're after a superb movie machine, you must see this Pioneer

ALSO CONSIDER

YAMAHA DVD-S2500
★★★★★
£700
Awards 2005
The rock-solid Yamaha produces fine pictures and sound. Easy to set up and use, too

ARCAM DIVA DV79
★★★★★
£1000
Awards 2005
A two-time Award winner – one of our favourites at this price, and as a complete music and movie all-rounder

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE
FINAL HT80I/S80
★★★★½
£ 1535

FOR
Technology content; articulate and detailed sound; agility

AGAINST
The S80 is a poor subwoofer; needs pampering to deliver; looks won't suit all

VERDICT
Swap the subwoofer for something better and you can't help but be impressed by the results

Final offers an electrifying listen

AN ELECTROSTATIC SURROUND package sounds exotic doesn't it? And it is. Electrostatic speakers work in a totally different way from conventional boxes, and the result is a different set of strengths and weaknesses.

Let's get the practical things out of the way first: each speaker needs mains power, which might or might not be a problem depending on where your sockets are. Also, position each one with care, or you'll never hear how good they can sound.

The svelte silver-and-black speakers divided tester opinion: some felt they looked like electric fly-killer panels

Straight on for great sounds

We got the best results with all the panels pointing directly at the main listening position, though move out of this sweet spot and the magic disappears. The package comes with wall brackets, while the tall stands cost £100 per pair, with a shorter centre support costing £60.

How does it all sound? You'll be all smiles if you *don't* buy the hugely disappointing £285 subwoofer, which bottoms out with minimal provocation and sounds soft compared to similarly priced alternatives from REL or Wharfedale.

Detail over dynamism

Its Final's HT80I surround speakers that impress. There isn't quite the dynamic impact of, say, B&W's MT satellites, but their electrostatic strengths – such as detail resolution, speed and seamless transition from midrange to treble – are as clear as just-washed crystal.

The result is a package of unusual insight: one that can communicate the atmosphere of some of the darker scenes of *Batman Begins* with considerable skill. Impact aside, the Final's package is equally happy with the busy fight scenes from the *Fantastic Four*.

This is a tempting package that works very well provided you pamper it, and don't forget to ignore that poor sub.

ALSO CONSIDER

B&W MT 30
★★★★★
£1575
September 2005
This is the standard setter at this price level. Great in all areas

TANNOY ARENA
★★★★★
£1199
August 2005
A terrific surround package that works well with all kinds of films

kiss-technology.com

KiSS

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High Definition Media Player with Ethernet & Wi-Fi Network Connectivity

KiSS DP-600 High Definition Media Player

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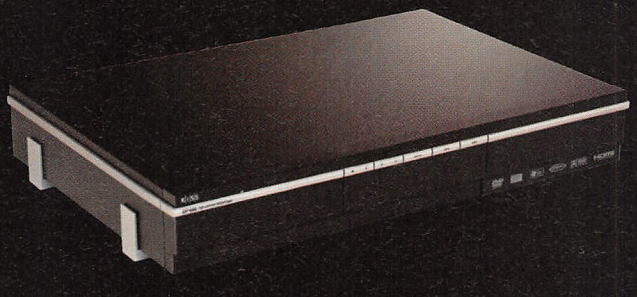
Setting the standard for high definition media players, the KiSS DP-600 bring brilliant color and clarity to your home movies and photos. High definition video looks sharper and clearer than regular video on any High Definition Ready TV, plasma and widescreen screens. So remove all your cables, enjoy Wi-Fi and plug the player into your home entertainment system to transform your living room into a state-of-the-art home cinema.



It's not just about playing DVDs

CD-RIPPING SERVICE
CDLABS
★★★★☆
£ 75
(50 CDs + P&P)

FOR
Excellent quality encoding; ID3 tags for every track; quick and hassle-free solution

AGAINST
Expensive if you only do a small number; no support for Apple Lossless

VERDICT
A great service that's hard to fault – what price do you put on convenience?

CDlabs offer ripping good time

SO MANY CDs, so little time to transfer them all to your new iPod. But if you're cash rich as well as time poor, you can pay CDlabs (*www.cdlabs.co.uk*) to do it for you.

You collect up your favourite discs, place them in the supplied secure container, lob in your MP3 player, and wait for a courier to come and whisk it away.

Five days later, your parcel is returned – with added goodies. Your MP3 player is now filled with your CD collection – in the file format of your choice – plus there's a DVD back-up of your tunes, too.

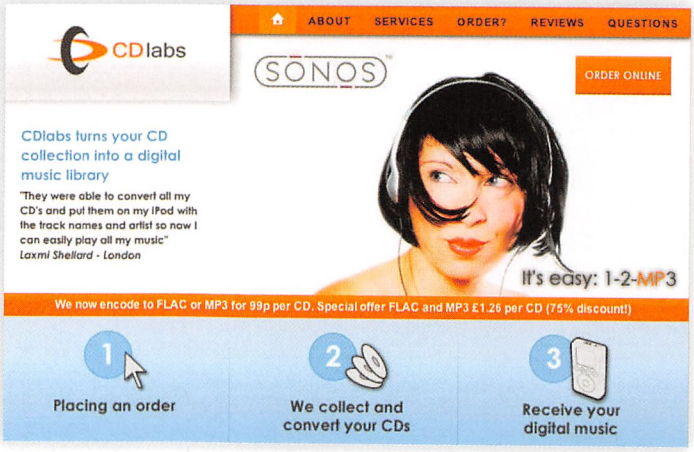
"Give your CDs and MP3 player to a courier: five days later they're back"

You choose the file format and bit-rate: AAC, MP3, WMA or FLAC. If you want the last option, FLAC, you'll need to supply CDlabs with a hard disk, or buy one from them.

FLAC is lossless audio that's popular with purist techie types, but its 500MB-per-CD (only a bit less than CD-Audio's 650MB) won't appeal to those looking to cram a collection on an iPod –not least because it's not compatible with Apple's players. Sadly, you're not given the option of Apple Lossless – the superior format of choice for portables.

The end product is great: CDlabs uses its own digital-encoding software, and our files – encoded at 320kbps AAC (as good as it gets without Lossless) – sounded superb, each immaculately labelled, complete with album artwork. The supplied DVD gives you ID3 tags for every track, too.

The basic cost is 99p per CD, with a £25 charge for insured P&P – so the more discs you want ripped, the better value the service becomes. If you don't mind spending the money, this is a great – if not perfect – solution.



If you really want someone to rip your CDs for you, then CDlabs will do a very fine job

26IN LCD TV
LOEWE
SPHEROS R 26
★★★★★
£ 1850

FOR
Fantastic image quality; highly desirable styling; superlative build; fine sound; spec is comprehensive

AGAINST
OK, so it's not that cheap: you can buy bigger for less

VERDICT
If you want a high quality small screen, this should fit the bill; it could be the best there is

Meet Loewe's little luxury LCD

HAILING FROM GERMANY, Loewe has long specialised in producing sophisticated, high-quality TVs that include features seldom found in mainstream rivals. They usually look superb, and almost always boast excellent build quality.

They also used to cost a packet, but not any more. While £1850 is plenty to be spending on a 26in flat TV, it's not a great deal more than Panasonic 'officially' asks for the Award-winning TX26LXD500.

"Picture quality is just glorious, and contrast levels are remarkable"

Of course, that wouldn't count for much if the Spheros R 26 wasn't at the very least as good as its Japanese rival – but, while we haven't yet conducted a comparison test, we're confident that it is. In fact, it could even be better: picture quality is just glorious, blending smoothness with beautiful colour vitality, and contrast levels are quite remarkable, too.

And, this being a Loewe, there are also armfuls of technology to admire. The Spheros R 26 is both Freeview-equipped and HD-Ready, with 1366 x 768 resolution and both HDMI and component inputs. It can also be fitted with a digital satellite TV module, making for a superbly convenient solution for the bedroom or kitchen.

Add in Loewe-standard sound quality (read: excellent) and clearly, this is a compact set to lust after.

Typically elegant Loewe styling, and the set looks pretty smart when you turn it on, too

ALSO CONSIDER ?

PANASONIC TX26LXD500
★★★★★
£1500
August 2005
Our current class favourite, this HD-Ready Award-winner is a great performer: looks the part, too

B&O BEOVISION 6-26
★★★★☆
£3250
February 2005
Every bit as exotic as the Loewe, and very capable – but the price is rather on the high side, don't you think?

B&W Bowers & Wilkins

MT-30
with PV1 subwoofer

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
B&W MT-20

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
BEST COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGE £1500+
B&W MT-30

> MINI THEATRE

Seeing a movie is one thing. Feeling it, getting swept away by it, is another. What you hear and how you hear it makes all the difference. When sound surrounds you, you're drawn deeper into the movie's highs and lows. B&W's stylish new Mini Theatre systems deliver movie sound with all the power and the presence to move you, without forcing you to move the furniture. Three configurations, each based around a different B&W subwoofer, offer alternatives to suit every size of private cinema.

The constant in each system is the compact M-1 satellite speaker, designed from scratch to provide lifelike cinematic sound, understated looks and instant usability. From its handpicked crossover componentry and tube-loaded tweeter to its high-strength, clamshell-style outer casing, the M-1 is a unified, integrated system in itself, optimised to deliver a natural, more organic sound to the movies you love.

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MT-10
with AS1 subwoofer

MT-20
with AS2 subwoofer

INTENSE

The RA-03

Individually, Rotel's 02 Series products will make a striking difference to the way you hear music. The RA-03 integrated amplifier, for example, is the latest in a long line of Rotel products that have benefited from meticulous component selection, painstaking refinement and balanced design. When partnered with the RCD-02, though, it's a match made in HiFi heaven. The chemistry is instant, and a powerful listening experience. Get them connected.

To find out more, visit www.rotel.com

Hi-Fi News Award Winner 2005

ROTEL

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO AMPLIFIERS
ROTEL RA-03

B&W Loudspeakers, Dale Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 2BH, 01903 221500

The best big-screen LCD TV yet

40IN LCD TV
SONY
KDL-V40A12U
★★★★★
£ 2400

FOR
Blessed with a fantastic picture; well-equipped and stylish; no more expensive than many 37in rivals; compact

AGAINST
Only that the sound lacks a little muscle

VERDICT
Effortlessly desirable and remarkably capable, this fabulous Sony will be a sure-fire sales success

IT'S TRADITIONAL FOR us to get to the end of a review before we tell you what we think of a product, but in this particular instance, we can't wait. So here it is, folks: Sony's new KDL-V40A12U is the best big-screen LCD TV we've seen.

That's some statement, but this is some TV. Part of the company's Bravia range, it's so impressive, it could well have won this month's *Supertest* of 37in flatscreen TVs (see p40), had it arrived in time to take part. We'll overlook the fact that it's a larger 40in screen, because it doesn't cost any more than most rival 37in sets in our test: it's also worth pointing out that its slim styling means it actually takes up no more space than its smaller-screen contemporaries.

Smooth, colourful and gorgeous

So, what makes the Sony so special? Ignore, if you can, its sumptuous styling, the simple elegance of its on-screen graphics, or the HD-Ready completeness of its spec: Sony is a master of on-shelf appeal, and has long produced kit that oozes desirability. This 40in Bravia set is no different: it'll sell on the strengh of its 'surface' appeal, even before you turn it on.

But while that's understandable, it doesn't do full justice to this Sony's outstanding image quality. The Bravia produces brilliant, vivid colours that fairly leap off the screen, even with off-air Freeview broadcasts. It's also smoother than extra-virgin oil, with no obvious sign of motion-smearing, background 'grain' or colour bleeding.

"This Sony TV's brilliant picture is as smooth as extra-virgin olive oil..."

Edges are pin-sharp and rock-solid, and there's little discernible digital noise to spoil the party. Most LCD (or plasma) sets look far less composed with plain old TV.

Switch to DVD, and most flatscreens are far happier, with this Sony no exception: DVD adds greater depth of field and vitality, boosts black depth and overall contrast, and reduces digital noise still further, to a point where you'll struggle to notice it no matter how intently you peer. And, equally obviously, a shift to High-Def video brings the greatest rewards of all: with 1366 x 768 resolution, the Sony positively glows when fed by HD content. We can't wait for those broadcasts to begin in the spring.

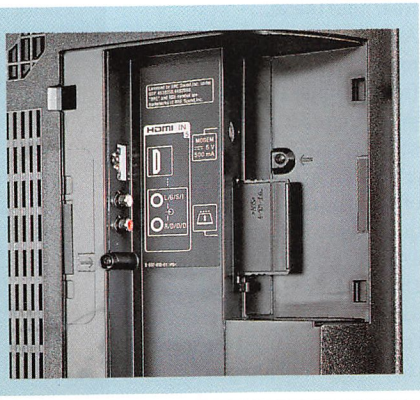
The gorgeous Sony boasts picture quality the equal of its styling – which means it's lovely!

Brickbats? Only one. As with its smaller brother (tested November 2005), the KDL-V40A12U doesn't sound that good: it's a little lacking in bass energy. However, that's the only weakness the 40in Bravia has in common with its sibling, which makes us wonder if our early sample of the smaller 32in set suffered from some sort of fault: we'll try to revisit it soon to see.

So, here we are. We've given away the ending already, so what's left to say? Only this: dear Santa, we'd really, really like one...

KNOW HOW HD-READY

SONY GOT caught-out with its last generation of flat TVs: although the company had long produced kit with appropriate levels of resolution for High Definition video support, few of its sets could meet the official EICTA 'HD-Ready' standard, because they lacked either a DVI-D or HDMI digital video input. The new Bravia series redresses that flaw in no uncertain terms: it includes both HDMI and component video (as it must, of course). It also provides a conditional-access reader for pay-per-view digital TV, such as the TopUp TV service, and even has a modem connector.



ALSO CONSIDER ?

PANASONIC TH37PV500
★★★★★
£2300
January 2006
Winner of an Award in the 37in size class, this lovely plasma TV possesses an excellent picture, and is HD-Ready

PIONEER PDP-436XDE
★★★★½
£2800
November 2005
Currently the best plasma around, this HD-Ready 43in stunner has a superlative picture, and is very well-equipped

TECH SPECS

TYPE LCD TV
SCREEN SIZE 40IN, 16 x 9
SUGGESTED VIEWING DISTANCE 3m
RESOLUTION 1366 x 768
INTEGRATED FREEVIEW Yes
PROGRESSIVE PAL Yes
PROGRESSIVE NTSC Yes
HD-READY Yes
RGB SCART Yes, x 3
COMPOSITE Yes
COMPONENT IN Yes
S-VIDEO IN Yes
PHONO IN Yes
PHONO OUT Yes
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 101 x 72 x 37cm (including stand)
WEIGHT 34kg

PORTABLE DIGITAL MEDIA PLAYER
iRIVER U10 1GB
★★★★☆
£ 190

U10 is an all-round entertainer

FOR
Tiny, but feature-laden music and movie player; great sound and neat little screen

AGAINST
We'd love to see a model with a bigger memory

VERDICT
iRiver dares not to ape the iPod and the result is the funkiest 1gigger in funky town

iRIVER'S U10 IS one of the most expensive 1GB digital portables we have ever seen. But it's also one of the most flexible and – by a long row of fluffy kittens – the cutest. Our picture shows iRiver's baby snuggling into its optional cradle, giving it a lovely retro CRT TV look, but to put things into perspective this is no 36in widescreen – more like a 2.2in to be exact. It's teeny.

Diminutive, yes, but the 70g U10 is big on features – check the list:

"The screen looks great, and its 28-hour battery life trumps many rivals"

MP3 and WMA music playback, JPEG slideshows, MPEG 4 video replay, FM tuner with presets, Flash games... hold on while we catch our breath... radio and voice recording, a timer and an alarm clock. That it? Nope, the £30 cradle adds stereo speakers (tinny but fun), a snooze button, USB port, a remote control, and line in and out.

Impressed? We are. Even better, though, this cutie sounds lovely, too. In typical iRiver fashion, tunes sound agreeably rich, with good levels of detail, and the supplied buds are above average fare. Switch to Sennheiser PX100 cans, and sonic results impress even further.

And it's not just with music this machine excels: the 320 x 240 screen looks great with games and videos, its 28-hour battery life trumps many rivals, and it's a breeze to operate.

However, its poor value costs it a star – a 30GB video iPod is just £29 more than this 1GB U10. Go figure...

Don't throw out your TV yet – the iRiver's screen is actually just 2.2 inches wide

ALSO CONSIDER

APPLE iPOD SHUFFLE
★★★★★
£89
November 2005
The smallest Apple offers sharps looks and tasty sound – it's the best 1GB player around, though it has no display

SONY PSP
★★★★★
£180
December 2005
Not just for games, the PSP also handles photos, movies and music

ACTIVE DESKTOP SPEAKERS
NHT M-00
★★★★☆
£ 219 each

Pro audio for your desktop?

FOR
Active speakers in a teeny cabinet... that don't sound teeny; agility and dynamics impress

AGAINST
A touch on the pricey side, but only a touch

VERDICT
Seriously flexible units, which cane most desktop rivals – snare a pair and you'll wonder how you previously lived without 'em

AT FIRST GLANCE these M-00s (we tested two of them) look like an expensive, small, and not overly pretty pair of monitors. However, there are clues to this system's provenance that'll make it particularly attractive to a certain kind of buyer.

The first is a dead giveaway: NHT is as well-known for producing kit for the pro audio industry as it is for the home market. It frequently designs speakers that sound good

"Each speaker includes an impressive 75-watt amplifier built into it"

close-up (near-field monitors), and these are widely used in the confined spaces of recording studios. The matt-black finish – neutral and tough – would also look at home in a studio.

Look around the back and you find a final clue: as well as phono inputs, each 23cm-tall speaker has an XLR balanced input and a TRS jack. The last two are common speaker connections in the pro audio arena.

Crucially, you'll also notice each speaker includes a built-in 75-watt amplifier. This means you can hook your computer or portable player straight up to these speakers.

We used the excellent £45 Supra Biline-MP mini-jack-to-phono cable, though we had to chop some of the shielding away because the left and right phono connectors have to reach the separate speakers. It's necessary to have an input on each because these speakers are sold individually, since some studios only work with mono sound.

Now hear these...

After a decent run-in, and using top-quality Apple Lossless files from an Apple G5 desktop computer, these active loudspeakers sound great. The sound is balanced and agile, with plenty of detail on offer. Overall, it's not quite as good as you'd get from a similarly priced Wharfedale Diamond 9.1/ Cambridge Azur 640A combo, but it's close – and the NHTs don't need the space to function well like 9.1s do.

There is a catch, though: if you want to use these speakers with a source that doesn't have a volume control – that's most hi-fi CD players – you'll need to buy the £109 offboard volume control, which makes this system kind of pricey, hence the loss of that fifth star.

Saying that, the M-00s blow most desktop systems out of the water, and we can't wait to try out the matching £429 S-00 active subwoofer – next month, hopefully.

Built by pro audio experts NHT, each M-00 active speaker has an impressive 75-watt amplifier

ALSO CONSIDER

ECLIPSE TD 307 PAWH
★★★★
£400
February 2005
To style what the NHT M-00s are to solidity – sound pretty slick, too

MONITOR AUDIO I-DECK
★★★★★
£250
October 2005
The i-deck isn't restricted to (though it's clearly aimed at) Apple iPods

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION SUPERTEST WINNER

Panasonic TH-37PV500

★★★★★

£2300

TEST RESULT Odd man out, in that it's a plasma, but it can't stop **Panasonic** taking the top honours

HIGH-DEFINITION IS is where it's going – if your big, flat TV doesn't have a digital input and adequate resolution for High-Def content it's going to be outdated very soon. All these TVs have that base covered, so it comes down to the question of performance per pound.

Who's bringing up the rear?

That's why the JVC screen brings up the rear: it's by no means inexpensive, yet the images it delivers (from any source) are the least convincing here. The LG is a slightly more eccentric proposition in as much as it does its best work through component inputs, but at least it's priced realistically.

There's only one winner

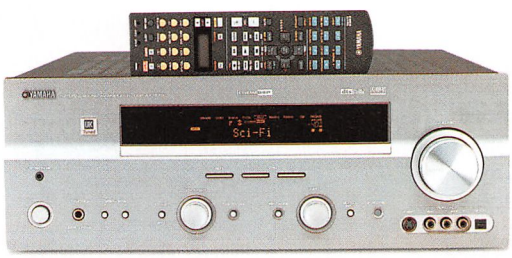
Our four, four-star products are much more agreeable. The Philips is the most far-sighted screen here, but looks expensive for what it can do for you right now. The Sharp is optimistically priced, though it produces lovely digital images. Toshiba's screen is a little less pricey, but still has picture flaws. The ViewSonic has a headline-grabbing price and, though not the finest, is cracking value.

Which leaves the Panasonic: the only plasma, with the lowest resolution, but still the clear winner of this month's *Supertest*.

NOW ADD THESE

DVD PLAYER
YAMAHA DVD-S2500
★★★★★
£ 700
Awards 2005
HDMI video output, Faroudja video-scaling, FireWire (iLink) digital audio outputs – a glance at the spec sheets goes some way to telling why this is worth £700. Then switch it on and revel in the superlative picture – crisp, clean, rich and natural all the way.

MULTICHANNEL AMP
YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE
★★★★★
£ 500
Awards 2005
The current Yamaha surround range is a bit hit-and-miss, but this amplifier scores a bull's-eye. Expansive, detailed sound, rigorous decoding and superb effects-steering... and it sets itself up, too.



SPEAKER PACKAGE
EPOS ELS3 5.1
★★★★★
£ 956
Awards 2005
Never mind the fact that the looks veer towards the traditional – it's not always time for silverness. Instead, bask in the sound quality. No detail is too fine and no explosion too forceful – this speaker package sounds way more expensive than it is.

TOTAL £4659*

1 DIGITAL VIDEO CABLE
QED QUNEX HDMI-P
★★★★★
£ 58
Awards 2005
In terms of detail retrieval, razor-sharp definition and three-dimensionality, the HDMI-P is a great buy.

2 AERIAL CABLE
QED Qunex TTV
★★★★★
£ 35
Awards 2005
After all that outlay on one of these lovely screens, you're not going to use the aerial cable it came with, are you? No! Use this.

3 SPEAKER CABLE
QED SILVER ANNIVERSARY XT
★★★★★
£ 5.50/m
Awards 2005
Link the Yamaha to the Epos speakers with this, and enjoy up-front, revealing sound.
**Budget for 20 metres.*

QUICK CHECK

The easiest way to make your MP3s sound better is to buy a better pair of headphones: spend at least £15

A colour display is great for photos and even video (if it supports the right formats), but is power-hungry

Try out a player's controls before you buy – there's no point owning a player you find frustrating to use

Apart from a few ultraportables, MP3 players don't use standard batteries, but recharge via a supplied cable

Instant Expert

MP3 PLAYERS NO. 7

KNOW HOW If you've yet to join the MP3 revolution, read on for the lowdown on the iconic iPod and its digital music friends

FIRST THE BASICS: MP3 – along with formats like AAC and WMA – is a compression standard that can squeeze music to a size where many more tracks can be stored on your computer hard drive, burned to CD or transferred to a portable player.

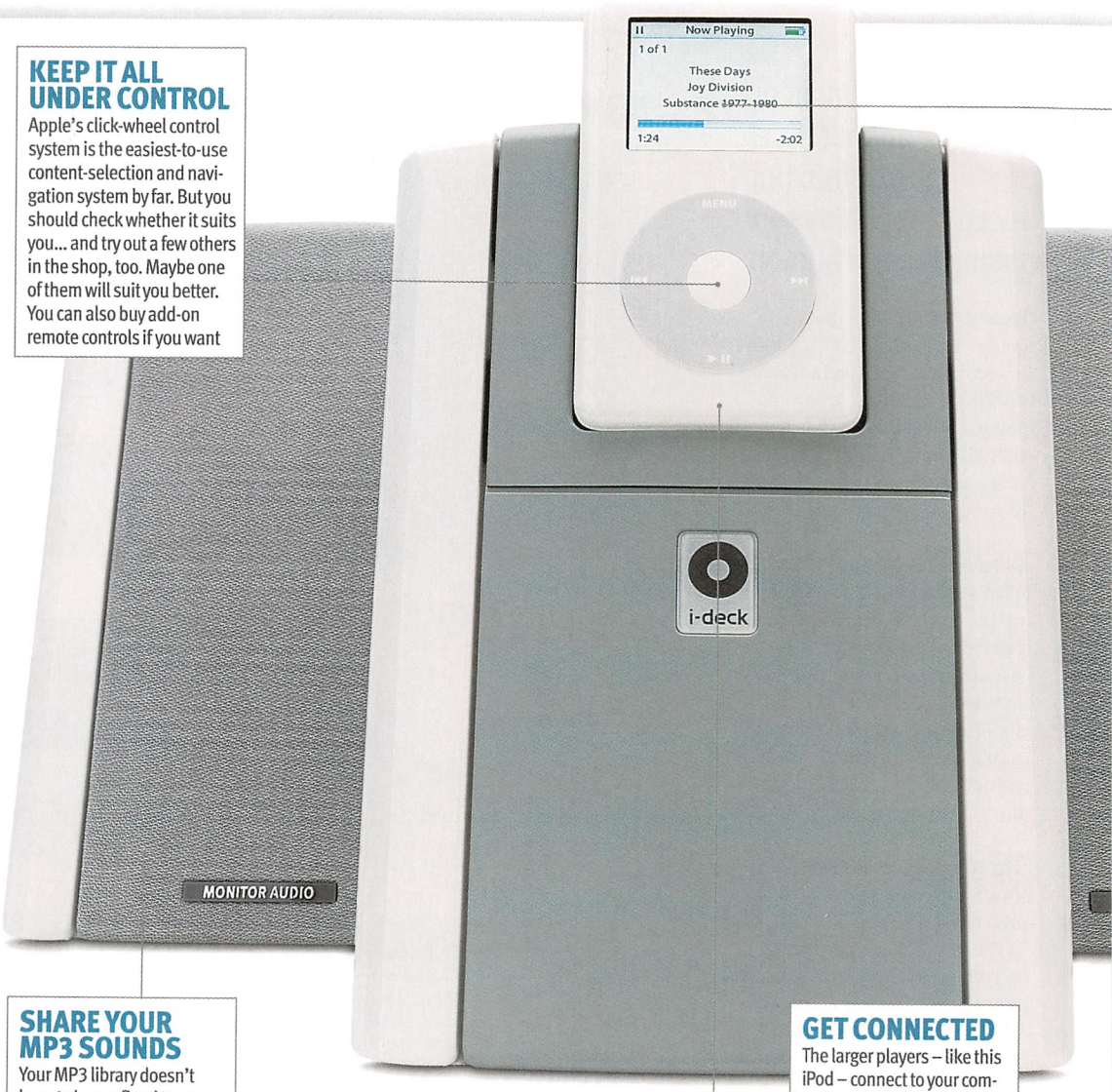
Now hard drives – including the ones used in 'jukebox' players like the iPod – are getting ever-bigger, many users are opting to 'rip' their files (convert their CDs to one of the compressed formats via their computer) in Apple's larger and superior-sounding Lossless format.

Not all players are PC and Mac compliant, and though they come with all the software/cables needed to transfer tracks, you must check your computer's operating system and sockets can cope. If you're planning to download tracks from a particular online music store, you also need to make sure your player supports the formats on sale.

It sounds obvious, but also pick the player that suits your mobile entertainment needs – for example, it's no good being able to take all your music on holiday with you if the battery runs out before you've got to the resort. Turn to our *Buyer's Guide* (p115) for facts and figures on every player we've tested to date.

KEEP IT ALL UNDER CONTROL

Apple's click-wheel control system is the easiest-to-use content-selection and navigation system by far. But you should check whether it suits you... and try out a few others in the shop, too. Maybe one of them will suit you better. You can also buy add-on remote controls if you want



SHARE YOUR MP3 SOUNDS

Your MP3 library doesn't have to be confined to your computer or portable player. See p82 for the many different ways you can hear your collection throughout your home – like Monitor Audio's i-deck (above). Many docks allow you to share video and photos via your TV, too

GET CONNECTED

The larger players – like this iPod – connect to your computer (and docking systems) via bespoke cable connections. Some smaller players – like the Sony Bean – plug directly into your computer via a USB interface. In both cases the players recharge their batteries – and their content – while connected

BEST BUYS

From bargain pocket players to keep you entertained on the daily commute, to sound and vision jukeboxes and exercise companions – there's now an MP3 player for everyone and every need. Here are our five faves

BEST FOR ALL-ROUND EXCELLENCE

APPLE iPOD 60GB

★★★★★-

£299

It's not just hype that sells iPods – they're the best-sounding players you can buy, not to mention the easiest-to-use for PC or Mac owners. The latest 'video' version puts the iconic jukebox ahead of its rivals yet again. Go for the 60GB model: it means more space for superior-quality Apple Lossless music files, and adds video into the equation – despite the 2.5in screen being a tad tiny, it's oddly compelling.

Apple's latest 'video' iPod looks and sounds as effortless as ever

BEST FOR FITNESS FREAKS

APPLE iPOD NANO 4GB

★★★★★

£179

If slim and attractive is your aim for yourself as well as your MP3 player, the nano could be your ideal exercise companion. Ignore the hype about scratching (while keeping it away from your keys) and get pounding the pavements to its energetic performance and taut bass beats. Use Apple Lossless files for the most muscular music. There's a stopwatch, too, and a quick scan of the Apple Store shows a multitude of devices for attaching the nano to your sweaty self.

The pencil-thin nano comes in black or white, and 2GB or 4GB sizes

BEST FOR VALUE

MP MAN MP-KI 128

★★★★★

£30

This is an absolute steal of a player. For £30 you get good looks, ultraportability and very respectable sound quality. And if your daily commute is a little too long for the MP Man's 128MB memory (enough for just over two hours of MP3 music ripped at a reasonable bit-rate), you can buy larger-capacity models for not much more. Unlike most cut-price players, the MP-KI doesn't sound too harsh, and offers decent bass. Sadly, only PC owners can take advantage of this budget belter.

The great-value MP-KI 128 costs just £30 and weighs only 30g – a baby bargain!

BEST FOR BATTERY LIFE

SONY NW-E205

★★★★½

£80

Meet the Sony Walkman Bean – aka the 512MB NW-E205 (or NW-207 if you opt for the £100, 1GB version). In this instance, beans means battery life – Sony claims up to 50 hours, and was still going strong after 40. A clever quick-charge option also allows you to add three hours of battery life in just three minutes. The Sony digs up a decent amount of music detail, and offers punchy bass for an ultraportable, but it sounds strained at higher volumes – the headphones suck, too.

Black, white and pink 'beans' are available, each weighing just 45g

BEST FOR VIDEO

CREATIVE ZEN VISION

★★★★★

£370

Another PC-only player, but a multimedia stunner all the same. The Zen Vision's 3.7in screen offers full 640 x 480 resolution – higher than many rivals – and is transflective, so you can watch in bright light. It has a handy memory-card slot that allows you to transfer photos/video direct from your digital camera/camcorder. On the sound side, there's also an FM radio and voice recorder – and music performance is superb. Shop around and you'll save some pounds, too.

WANT VIDEO AS WELL AS MUSIC?

Many of the latest players have colour screens – ideal to view photos and even video, plus you can add album art to your music collection. Look for the highest resolution screen you can buy. If you want to watch your videos on a larger screen, look out for docks with an S-Video output

THE RIGHT SIZE?

Using the minimum MP3 bit-rate we recommend (128kbps), you can store around 13 CDs on 1GB of memory. If you want to carry more songs (or videos), or up the bitrate for better sound, (192kbps is a super ior compromise between file size and quality), look at players like the 60GB iPod

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42"
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the choice of professionals

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STEREO AMPLIFIER
UNISON RESEARCH UNICO
★★★★☆
£750

FOR
Fine build, good looks (if you like this sort of thing); brilliantly articulate midrange

AGAINST
Top end can harden to a surprising degree

VERDICT
Capable enough, and very likeable, but the Unico Line is only another £150... and that's what we'd spend our money on

Unico P's likeable, but no Line

A WHILE AGO, Unison Research decided it was undercharging for its splendid Unico Line amplifier, and hiked the price up from £775 to £900. That didn't stop us liking it, though it seemed a strange move. A year or so later, UR spots a gap in the market where the Line used to be – and voilà! Here's the Unico P.

Different class of remote

The casework isn't enough to differentiate between the Unico and the 'P', but the remote is: more expensive UR models sport interesting wood'n'steel handsets, but the 'P' makes do with something that looks like it has come with a supermarket-special DVD player.

There's no mistaking the familial connection, though, when the 'P' is underway. The usual Unison Research combination of transistor and valve technology produces a lush, widescreen sound. And the

"The blend of transistors and valves produces this lush, widescreen sound"

familiar UR facility with vocals is to the fore: Kate Bush's *Pi* sounds as emotionally naked as a list of numbers ever could.

Low frequencies are taut enough, with worthwhile tonal differentiation, and songs roll along with a fine grasp of timing. There's certainly no shortage of communication, and the presentation as a whole hangs together well

Yet something unsettling is happening at the top end. Treble frequencies are brighter and more brittle than we remember Unison Research allowing, meaning they're at odds with the cosseting warmth of the rest of the frequency range.

That alone could be worth docking a star for, but what really confirms the four-star rating in this instance is the fact that the Unico Line integrated – which this 'P' is meant to fill in for – can be bought for only another £150. And that's money well spent.

It looks similar to the Line amp, but the P can't match its big brother's class

ALSO CONSIDER

CYRUS 8vs
★★★★★
£850
October 2004
Jack of all trades and master of most of them – this amp is unarguable value

NAIM NAIT 5
★★★★★
£699
April 2004
Endlessly musical, engaging and endearing – doesn't demand a Naim-centric system, either

STEREO SPEAKERS
OPERA MINI
★★★★☆
£650

FOR
Luxury build and finish; insightful sound; excellent integration

AGAINST
Not the right choice for party levels or hardcore dance music

VERDICT
These Operas are a great choice for those willing to sacrifice a bit of muscle for an extra dose of finesse

Opera's Mini boxes really sing

UP UNTIL NOW, those after a pair of high quality, ultra-compact speakers around this £600-£700 had a choice of just two models: AVI's Neutron IVs at £500, and ProAc's £699 Tablette Reference 8s. Now add these Operas to that list.

To get the best performance these speakers should be mounted on tall stands – Opera make lovely looking dedicated supports for £245, though you could audition Partington's new £129 Trophy stands – to be tested here soon. In addition, put them close to a rear wall for a bit of bass reinforcement.

Quality bass from a small box

Once they're set up properly, these speakers sing. Sure, nothing that only stands barely 28cm tall is going to produce the sort of basslines that get your room shaking: quality not quantity is what these Operas are about. Low frequencies are taut and tuneful in a manner that eludes many larger rivals, while the treble is crisp without showing any harshness.

The Minis' party trick is the way they throw up a sound of such listening-room-filling scale that they themselves are impossible to locate once you close your eyes. This is due to seamless drive unit integration, coupled to a rigid, curved cabinet that imparts a cleaner sound than the conventional MDF alternative.

If these Opera speakers produced a sound with a touch more punch and crisper timing it would keep fans of the Gorillaz as happy as those of Mahler. As it is, they can't

"Quality not quantity is what these compact Opera Minis are about"

claim to be perfect all-rounders. However, they are good enough to be a viable alternative to the class-leaders from AVI and ProAc.

A final mention must go to the superb real-wood finish, available in cherry, mahogany and durmast (a type of oak, for those not horticulturally inclined). Together with the leather-finished front baffle, it would impress at twice the price.

Opera's Minis might be small, but they do more than enough well

Minis sound as polished as their luxury finish suggests

ALSO CONSIDER

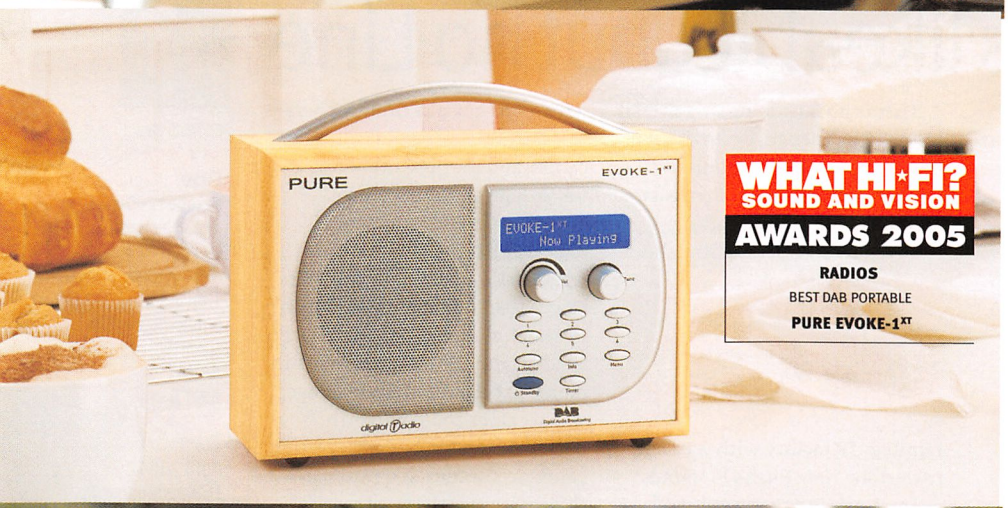
AVI NEUTRON IV
★★★★★
£500
July 2005
These compact speakers excel at detail resolution and low-level dynamics

PROAC TABLETTE REFERENCE 8
★★★★★
£699
August 2004
Little boxes that will astound you with their sonic abilities in a suitable system

Audio without compromise. DAB without equal.

OASIS

Rechargeable Weatherproof DAB Digital Radio



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SPEAKER SYSTEM
ACOUSTIC ENERGY
AEGO M
★★★★★
£ 100

FOR
Looks great, works superbly; real power and good integration make the Aego M one of the best-sounding speaker systems in its class

AGAINST
Nada

VERDICT
Cute, cheap and very, very good: what more do you want? Cake?

WE'VE HEARD MORE than a few audio systems aimed at the iPod over the last year. Can't imagine why.

Thing is, while we can readily understand why everyone has been so keen to leap about Apple's audio bandwagon, the results of all this endeavour have been a little varied, quality-wise. Many of the speaker systems we've heard have been somewhat 'challenged' sonically.

"The Acoustic Energy sounds terrific, with excellent cohesion"

Not so here. For both value for money and sound quality, the Acoustic Energy Aego M is almost beyond reproach. A compact subwoofer/satellite speaker system, it includes everything you'll need to link in your portable audio player, your computer, your games console or even, if you so desire, your DVD player. Available in black or white, it comprises two diminutive (6.8cm high) satellite speakers, which connect to and are driven by the amplification housed in the larger active subwoofer module. The latter also contains a set of analogue inputs for an audio source.

So far, so familiar: many so-called '2.1' packages are similar. But the Acoustic Energy also sounds terrific – it offers ample bass, excellent cohesion between upper and lower frequencies, and oodles of volume if desired.

OK, so some styling tweaks aside, the Aego M is basically similar to elements of the Aego P5 system we've been recommending for years. So what: when something works this well, all it needs is a nip and a tuck.

In a world of novelty iPod speaker systems, the Aego M's refreshingly real

ALSO CONSIDER

JBL ENCOUNTER
★★★★★
£99
October 2005
Fabulous styling and great sound from this sleek, stylish 2005 Award-winner

ECLIPSE TD 307 PAWH
★★★★½
£400
February 2005
Outstanding stereo imaging and remarkable design flair, but not exactly what you'd call cheap

Partington is a solid supporter

EQUIPMENT RACK
PARTINGTON
MINIM
★★★★★
£ 389

VERDICT
Solid, strong and very effective, the Minim is a pricey but very effective upgrade for a good hi-fi

PARTINGTON IS BETTER known for its acclaimed loudspeaker stands (the company has notched up several Awards in recent years), but the new Minim hi-fi rack looks set to be every bit as successful as its siblings.

A typically solid, sturdy affair, it's an all-metal design with glass supporting shelves, and is available in any colour you like – so long as you like black. Adjustable shelf heights can cope with different-sized pieces of equipment, and sonically, the Minim is true to Partington form. With a suitable hi-fi in situ, you'll enjoy deep, agile bass, a more open and expressive midrange, and treble that never sounds harsh. In the right set-up, then, a great buy.

The Minim is strong enough to house even the heaviest of hi-fi kit

Perstel's tidy MP3/DAB twin

DAB/FM RADIO
MP3 PLAYER
PERSTEL DR301
★★★★½
£ 150

FOR
Detailed, intimate sound; easy to use; smart and small unit; doubles as a music player and recorder with SD card

AGAINST
Headphones are decidedly average; only room for three presets; pity you can't rewind more than one minute

VERDICT
Good features, enjoyable to use, plus it looks and sounds accomplished

THIS SMART, STURDY portable isn't content with just being an FM and DAB radio – this genuinely pocketable unit also includes an SD memory card slot, so you can record DAB radio on it and play MP3s from it.

The unit is powered by three AA batteries or a compatible power supply (not supplied). It's easy to find stations on the FM tuner, but there are only three presets. Switch to DAB and, after a quick scan, the '301 throws up over 50 stations – all presented with scrolling station info and the right channel labels.

"Useful features include the ability to rewind DAB radio"

Other useful features include the ability to rewind the last minute of any DAB broadcast, or to record at the bit-rate of your choice – 10 minutes at 128kbps uses 10MB of your SD card (not supplied). It's PC-only, and works with MP2, MP3 and WMA formats.

An SD card stores MP3s and DAB radio

MP3 or DAB sound via the supplied earbuds is on the bright side, but upgrade to a decent pair of headphones, and the sound is far more balanced.

If you want DAB and MP3 in one, the Perstel is a great option. Try it!

ALSO CONSIDER

NEVADA ND-01
★★★★★
September 2005 £80
Superb value and sounds great – a brilliant pocket DAB and FM radio, our 2005 Award-winner

PHILIPS DA1000
★★★★★
July 2005 £150
A tidy and compact personal tuner, with a wealth of presets for both DAB and FM

Best buys

1/2006

Just starting on the road to your first cinema or hi-fi system? Here's our guide to **what you'll need**, using the hottest equipment you can buy

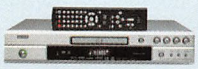
NEW ENTRY A few years back, there were hardly any 37in flat TVs to test, while quality was low and prices high. Now, the market is flooded, and this *Supertest*-winning Panasonic TH37PV500 costs just £2300, has a sublime picture, and is High-Def-Ready – see p40.

NEW ENTRY Pro-ject has been building superb budget record decks as long as most of us can remember, and the MkIII model of the Debut is a multiple Award-winner. On p11, we test the latest £200 version, which includes auto lift-off for the tonearm.

NEW ENTRY The only slight grumble we have about Sony's RDR-HXD710 – our current Award-winning DVD recorder – is its lack of an HDMI socket. Guess what the new RDR-HXD910 (p8) offers? Yep, that superior digital connectivity – and a larger hard drive, too.

HOME CINEMA ESSENTIALS

WELCOME TO THE very best movie kit money can buy – whatever your budget. Whether you're after a whole new system or just one component, here are the building blocks for premium performance

£	DVD PLAYERS	RECEIVERS	SPEAKERS
BUDGET SYSTEM DVD player £99 Multichannel receiver £330 Speaker package £500 Television £1600 **£2529**	 TOSHIBA SD-350E ★★★★★ £99 Though the performance via HDMI isn't what it might be, the picture quality via component is unbelievable for £99	 DENON AVR-1906 ★★★★★ £330 Another Award-winning home-cinema receiver from the masters, Denon. You can't buy better sound for this money	 WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9 HCP ★★★★★ £500 Now a double Award winner. Its traditional looks combine with sensational performance
MIDRANGE SYSTEM DVD player £250 Multichannel receiver £500 Speaker package £1900 Television £2800 **£5450**	 DENON DVD-1920 ★★★★★ £250 This year's DVD Product of the Year, the Denon plays just about every music and movie disc format incredibly well	 YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE ★★★★★ £500 Another Product of the Year – Yamaha's UK-tuned home cinema amp powers out movies in a detailed, definite way	 MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV ★★★★★ £1900 Make that three Products of the Year! It's easy to see and hear why MA's package won this year: it looks and sounds classy
HIGH-END SYSTEM DVD player £1000 Multichannel receiver £1000 Speaker package £3990 Projector £3499 **£9489**	 ARCAM DV79 ★★★★★ £1000 A world-class DVD player with a cracking picture – especially via HDMI. Also plays CDs incredibly well. A superb all-rounder	 YAMAHA RX-V4600 ★★★★★ £1000 For a system that excels with movie soundtracks this Yamaha is a must. Stunning steering and detail from a hefty box	 MISSION ELEGANTE e82 ★★★★★ £3990 Sleek and curvaceous with a similarly attractive sound – these Missions are our favourite package for music and movies

HOME CINEMA OPTIONS

£	DIGITAL RECORDERS	COMPACT SPEAKERS	FULL-SIZE SPEAKERS
BUDGET	Digifusion FVRT200 £170	KEF KHT1005 £300	Epos ELS3 5.1 £956
MIDRANGE	Sony RDR-GX510 £400	B&W MT-20 £975	Monitor Audio RS6 AV £1900
HIGH-END	Sony RDR-HXD710 £500	B&W MT-30 £1575	B&W 805S/HTM4S/ ASW825 £5750

£	PROJECTORS	SUBWOOFERS	VIDEO CABLES
BUDGET	ScreenPlay 4805 £799	Wharfedale Diamond SW150 £250	QED Sqart 2110 £30
MIDRANGE	BenQ PE7700 £1680	Velodyne CHT-12R £469	QED QUNEX P-CV1 (component) £45
HIGH-END	SIM2 HT 300 E £6000	B&W PV1 £950	QED Qunex HDMI-P £58

DISPLAYS

PANASONIC TX26-LXD500

★★★★★

£ 1600

This HD-ready 26in LCD TV won a best-in-class Award for its blend of magnificent ability and superb styling

PIONEER PDP-436XDE

★★★★★

£ 2800

Winner of our Award for best 40in+ flat TV, this HD-ready, 43in Pioneer plasma is a must-see, big-screen stunner

SCREENPLAY 7210

★★★★★

£ 3499

Our current favourite at this price – the Award-winning Screenplay 7210 offers a superlative picture for the money

LOOK!

LOGITECH mm50

Another pearl-white iPod speaker dock? Yes, but in this instance your £100 is well spent – awesome!

ALL IN ONE BOX

Sony DAV-DZ500F £449

Philips LX7500R £750

Denon Smart Life S-301 £1250

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Get smart

Use our tests and *Buyer's Guide* to learn more about the products and technologies that can boost your sound and vision. It pays to be spec-savvy: you'll buy better kit for your money. Set a rough budget, too

2 Try before you buy

Make sure your planned purchases meet your exact needs: arrange to audition them in a retailer's demo room or during a home trial, not on the shop floor when you can't get to know them

BUYER'S GUIDE £

Every verdict starting p115

3 Use your own discs to compare kit

Improving your system is about getting more from the music and movies you love, and spinning your favourite DVDs and CDs will help you see and hear how individual components or systems compare

4 Value is about more than price

Search around and compare prices from a range of suppliers, but always consider service and support as part of the package – will the retailer be there to help you?

"The Dali twin-tweeter Ikon 2 speakers endow music with rich emotion and lashings of punch"

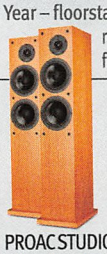
RATINGS EXPLAINED

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION's world-respected star ratings are awarded on a performance-per-pound basis: it's not enough for a product to be great, it's got to be great-value, too. Five-star ratings are awarded to the class-leaders, but four-star products are also well worth considering – they might not have the all-round ability of the very best, but they're still superior products and could be better for your system

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

HI-FI ESSENTIALS

MAKE THE MOST of your music with our supreme selection of hi-fi systems and separates. Our three set-ups below help you build a core CD system, to which you can add any option – from vinyl to DAB to MP3

£	CD PLAYERS	AMPLIFIER	SPEAKERS
BUDGET SYSTEM CD player £250 Amplifier £250 Speakers £180 **£680**	 CAMBRIDGE AZUR 640C MkII ★★★★★ £ 250 Cambridge Audio's Award-winning Azurs are classy hi-fi on a budget, as this top player shows	 CAMBRIDGE AZUR 640A ★★★★★ £ 250 Continuing the Azur success story is this perfect partnering amp. Whatever music you love, it brings it to life	 WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1 ★★★★★ £ 180 Still in our Award-winning line-up after all this time, for their sensational value
MIDRANGE SYSTEM CD player £650 Amplifier £500 Speakers £400 **£1550**	 CYRUS CD6s ★★★★★ £ 650 CD player Product of the Year – never has such awesome musicality been so affordable. Thank you Cyrus!	 ROTEL RA-03 ★★★★★ £ 500 Well whaddya-know – it's our stereo amplifier Product of the Year, adding visual and sonic class to this system	 KEF iQ5 ★★★★★ £ 400 Completing the trio is another Product of the Year – floorstanders with real flair from KEF
HIGH-END SYSTEM CD player £1500 Amplifier £1500 Speakers £1400 **£4400**	 PRIMARE D31 ★★★★★ £ 1500 This best-in-class Award winner hits the spot in all the right places with its detailed, forceful sound. A superb CD player	 PRIMARE I30 ★★★★★ £ 1500 Another Award-winning Primare. This amp offers detail, dynamics and timing in abundance. It's a must-listen	 PROAC STUDIO 140 ★★★★★ £ 1400 These Award winners are the perfect partners for the Primare pairing. Simple but highly effective speakers

HI-FI OPTIONS

£	TURNTABLES	DAB RADIOS	SYSTEMS
BUDGET	Pro-ject Debut III £130	Pure Evoke 1-XT £100	Goodmans 1104 DAB £90
MIDRANGE	Clearaudio Emotion £655	Pure Evoke 2-XT £150	Onkyo CR505DAB £220
HIGH-END	Wilson Benesch Full Circle £2100	Denon TU-1800DAB £250	Arcam Solo £1000

£	MP3	HEADPHONES	CABLES
BUDGET	Apple iPod Shuffle FROM £69	Sennheiser PX100 £30	QED Silver Anniversary XT £5.50/m
MIDRANGE	Apple iPod nano FROM £139	Grado SR60 £90	Merlin Chopin £85
HIGH-END	Apple iPod 60GB £299	Grado SR325i £310	Clearer Audio Copper-Line £95

POP MUSIC 101
Quiz family and friends with a *Now That's What I Call A Music Quiz* DVD, crammed full with over 1500 pop trivia questions. Sure to stretch your Xmas-addled grey matter

ALBA'S DAB HAND
Here's yet another DAB radio option, this time from budget kings Alba. At just £40 the TRDAB2830 certainly looks presentable enough – we'll let you know how it sounds next month...

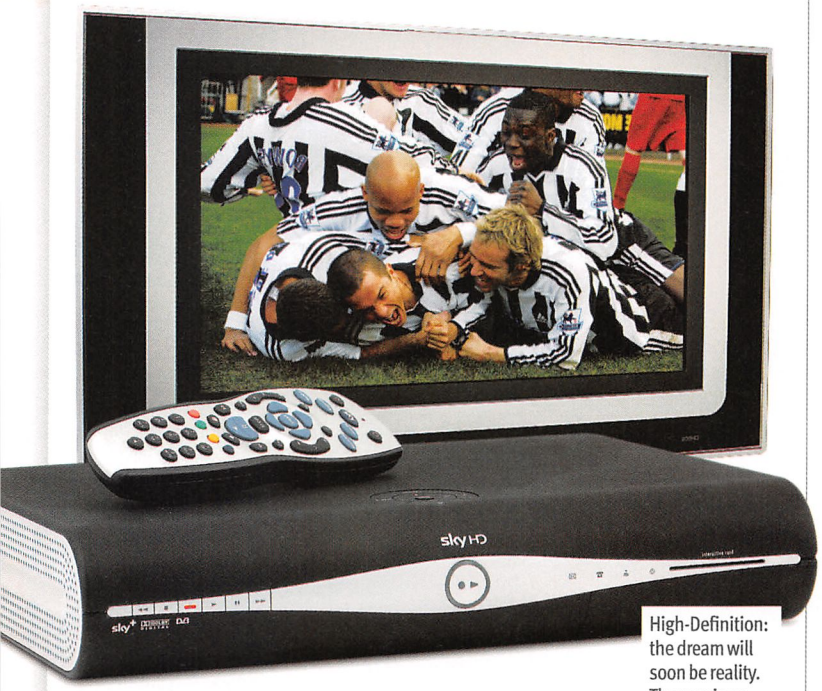
USB TV
How about letting Hauppauge turn your laptop or PC into a digital TV? The WinTV HVR-900 (£75), is the size of a USB stick, plugs into a USB 2.0 slot and, via the supplied aerial, delivers a Freeview television signal

DOCKTER DOCKTER
Fear not iPod Shuffle owners – you too can jump on the dock bandwagon, and listen to your Shuffle's tunes on a compact portable speaker system. The i-Station shuffle from Logic3 is available now and costs £30.

What's new?

LATEST PRODUCTS INSIDE INFO

Sky & Telewest racing to be first with High Def TV



High-Definition: the dream will soon be reality. The race is on...

IT'S BEEN ANOTHER exciting month of announcements in the world of High Definition TV. Sky, Telewest and the good ol' Beeb have all given us a few more morsels of information to feast upon.

First, Sky has announced details of its HD channel line-up. Sky Sports HD will lead the way, with High-Definition Premiership football, Premiership rugby union, and international cricket. Two Sky Movies HD channels will also begin around April 2006, while Sky One and Artsworld will both 'simulcast' programmes already shot in HD. Expect other channels such as Discovery and National Geographic to get in on the act, too.

Telewest could win the race to air the first HD content however, with movies and drama programmes ready to roll in early 2006. This will coincide with the launch of its 'TV Drive' video-recording device, which comes complete with three tuners and a 160GB hard disk.

The BBC has also reiterated its desire to support the new format, announcing that HD trials will take place in 2006 for Freeview viewers in London. More widespread HD content will follow once the BBC's digital switchover begins in 2008.

MP3

LET'S GET CREATIVE

CREATIVE HAS BOOSTED its MP3 pulling power with the launch of the Zen Sleek Photo. Building on the success of the standard Zen Sleek, this new £220 version incorporates a 1.7-inch OLED screen, capable of displaying an eye-watering 262,144 colours – you can even set your favourite pic as wallpaper. It has 20GB capacity for around 10,000 songs, and a single battery charge should last you around 19 hours of playback.

HI-FI

MICROSCOPIC MARVELS

THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL of some new mini monitor speakers from B&W has us salivating at WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Towers. As you'll be aware, the 805s standmounts had us all in raptures, whether as a stereo pair or in a surround system. B&W tells us the £500 CM1 speakers were developed concurrently with those very Award-winners, so we're hoping for something truly exceptional from these 28cm-high loudspeaker delights.

COMING SOON...

19TH DEC

This Ryan Adams chap is, 'arguably the most eclectically prolific artist since Prince'... apparently. High praise indeed: it suggests we might just have to check out his new album, simply called *29*.

26TH DEC

It's Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson teaming up again to provide the gags. *The Wedding Crashers* follows the two smooth-talking lads as they womanise their way through life.

2ND JAN

The *First Impressions of Earth* is the intriguingly titled third album from The Strokes. Fingers crossed if you're hoping to see them live in 2006 – as yet there are no UK dates on their tour schedule.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION SHOW 2005

NOVOTEL LONDON WEST
4TH-6TH NOVEMBER

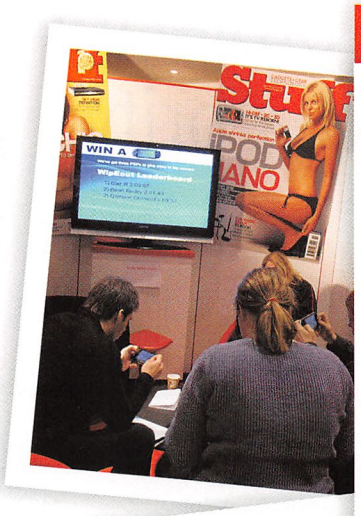
In association with Stuff

THE FIRST WEEKEND of November saw the 2005 WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Show descend, once again, on the superb venue that is London's Novotel West Hotel and Convention Centre.

Many thanks to all of you who attended this fantastic event – it was a sensational success for manufacturers and visitors alike. We also had a few unexpected famous names drop by, including England goalkeeper Paul Robinson and Olympic gold medallist Linford Christie.

This year, the primary focus of many exhibitors was on High-Definition TV. Big hitters such as Philips and Sony were all showing scintillating footage, while Sky was also on hand to give a public viewing of its soon-to-be-released Sky HD service.

As always, the WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION demonstration was a real crowd-pleaser. Members of the public were treated to HD movie trailers and a mixture of sports and documentary content – who knows what we'll be showing next year! In 2006, we'll be returning to the Novotel from the 3rd to the 5th of November, so mark the dates in your diary now.



HIGHLIGHTS

EXPOSURE LAUNCHED ITS eagerly awaited Classic 35 integrated amplifier. Retailing at £1600, it boasts 80W per channel, and includes both two preamp outputs, and two sets of speaker terminals.

NUVU'S INNOVATIVE POP-UP screen design looked intriguing. There are four sizes available, ranging from 55-inch to 88-inch diagonal in size and £250 to £350 in price.

VIVID AUDIO'S NEW V1 loudspeaker (£3950) certainly caught the eye. The funky-looking cabinets are made from a carbon-fibre-loaded polyester compound and come in oyster grey, sahara beige, copper (pictured) and metallic white finishes.

Black is back: the latest Naim cinema system

NAIM UNVEILED ITS new n-Vi system (£2995). This DVD-Video, DVD-Audio and CD disc spinner boasts an integrated preamplifier and five-channel power amplifier. The complete home cinema system also gives you the option of a FM/DAB radio module that pushes the price up to £3250. Naim has confirmed a video-scaler module will be available this spring.

SAVE THE DATE

SOUND & VISION THE BRISTOL SHOW

WHADDYA MEAN you don't know whether you're going? This is the one and only Bristol Show, home to hundreds of hi-fi and home cinema products, all under one roof. Get your diary out right now, and add in 24th-26th February, Marriot City Centre Hotel, Bristol. See *www.bristolshow.co.uk* for all the info...

9TH JAN
We're chuffed to see one of our most popular test discs getting the extended director's cut treatment. This three-disc edition Hellboy is packed with extras, and should sound great.

9TH JAN

The scarily prolific Pharrell Williams is one half of N.E.R.D., at the same time as being R'n'B producer to the stars. *In My Mind* shows off his ability twiddling knobs and on the mic.

9TH JAN

Yet another remake, folks! We'll allow you to decide if *The Dukes of Hazzard* serves any purpose other than the chance – for those to whom it appeals – to ogle Jessica Simpson.

Sony's 300in projector is a big-screen celebrity

The VPL-VW100 projector is all set to show the best-quality 1080p High-Def

IF YOUR CREDIT limit can't quite stretch to Sony's stunning £20,000+ Qualia 004 projector, then the Japanese giant has a slightly more affordable alternative. The VPL-VW100 (above) offers you similarly stunning spec and looks for around £7000.

New display panels handle the trickery

The VPL-VW100 makes use of a 400-watt Pure Xenon lamp, and can fire out an immense image, up to a diagonal size of 7.5m – that's 300 inches in old money.

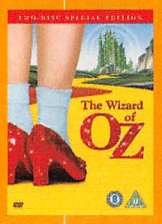
Key to this box of tricks is Sony's Silicon X-tal Reflective Display (SXRD) panel technology. The VPL-VW1000 uses three SXRD panels, which draw on the workings of LCD projectors, to deliver a fully High-Definition-compatible 1080p resolution of 1920 x 1080 pixels. Sony also claims the use of these panels produces a smoother, more 'film-like' image than we're used to from conventional projectors. Add to that significantly improved

"An ultra-high-resolution projector from Sony firing out a 7.5m diagonal image"

contrast levels (up to 15,000:1), and a lamp that lasts for around 2500 hours. Clearly, there are some big-screen treats in store.

Finally, the Sony has a comprehensive array of connections, which include HDMI, DVI-D and component video. You'll find the Sony in the shops now.

DEAL OF THE MONTH



We're off to see the *Wizard of Oz*, thanks to this two-disc special edition of the 1939 classic. There's a sparkling new digital transfer, and even the soundtrack has been digitally remastered into Dolby Digital 5.1. Tesco Jersey has it for just £12.97 at *http://jersey.tesco.*

HI-FI

TEAC A LOOK AT THIS DAB RADIO

The R3 is the top-of-the-range portable DAB radio in TEAC's funky new range

If you're on the lookout for a new radio, cast your eyes over TEAC's new portable radio collection. It consists of three models: the £70 R1, the £80 R2 and the – wait for it – R3, at £120. The R3 (above) looks the pick of the bunch: it's a DAB/FM model that includes a LCD display, digital clock, sleep timer and 7.5cm full-range loudspeaker.

The Signature upgrade is to Monitor Audio's Gold Reference range

HI-FI

A NEW GOLD STANDARD

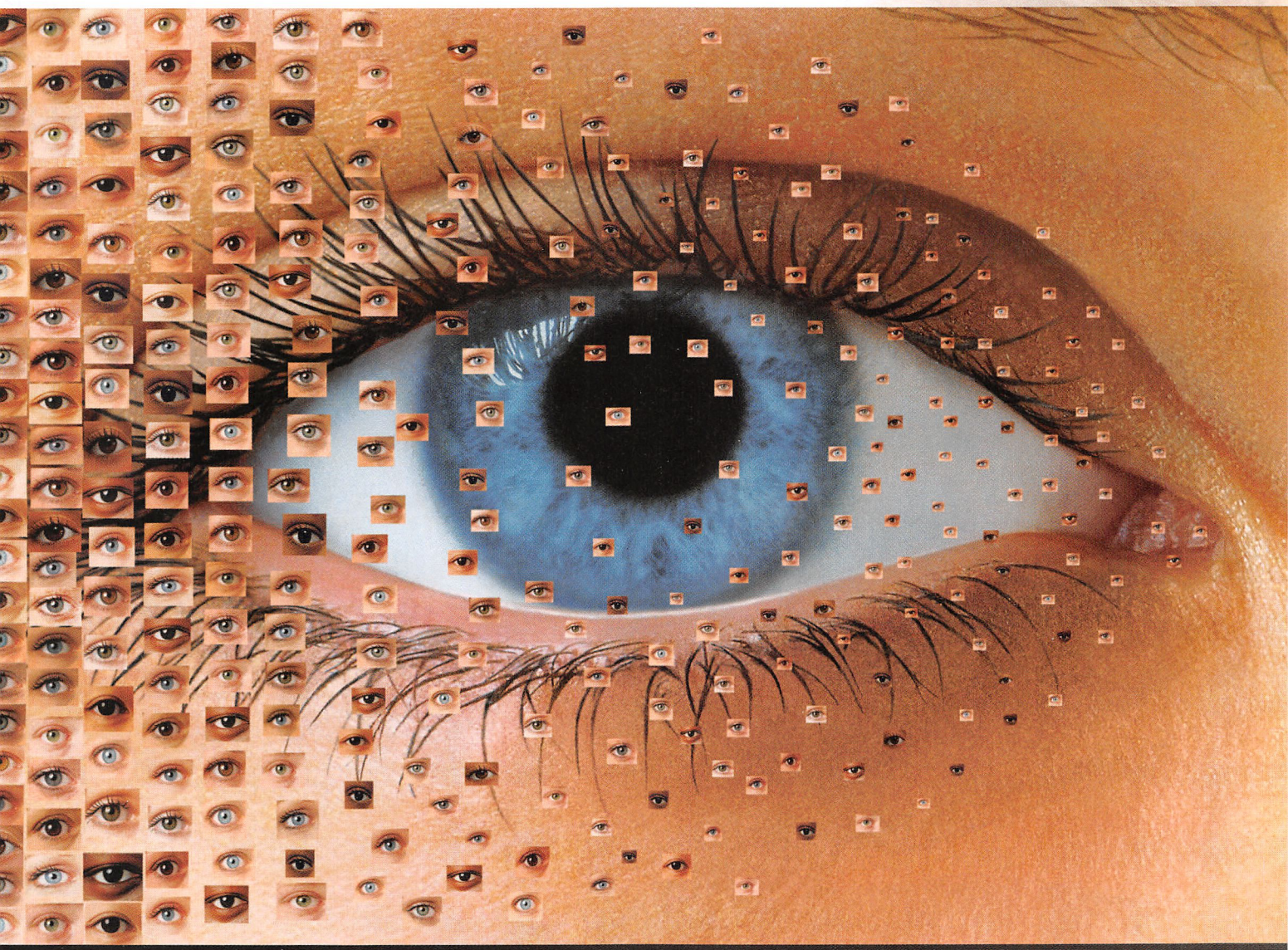
If you want to go for gold, Monitor Audio has updated its flagship speaker series to Gold Signature standard. The enhanced six-model line-up is in the shops now, and costs from £800/pair for the GS10s, £1500/pair for the GS10s and £2000/pair for the GS60 speakers.

HOME CINEMA

DIGITAL SOUND, RETRO STYLE

The CDP-300 is a brand new DVD player from Canadian manufacturer Classé. Taken from the company's new Delta Series, it's not exactly cheap, but at £4950 is packed with high-quality components, and boasts some mouth-watering features. The CDP-300 offers 1080p video scaling via its HDMI output, and up to 1080i through component video. Look out for a first review very soon.

Pioneer sound.vision.soul



See High Definition with Pioneer Plasma TV.

Open your eyes to Pioneer's PURE Vision Black series. Designed to give you optimum viewing pleasure, it is ready for High Definition content producing the sharpest, most highly defined images. Plus, the truly remarkable PUREBLACK Crystal Layer gives you blacker blacks and brighter colours. Want to tune into digital? With our digital multimedia receiver you have full access to the latest cutting edge developments.

EISA BEST PRODUCT 2005-2006 PLASMA TV Pioneer PDP-504XDE

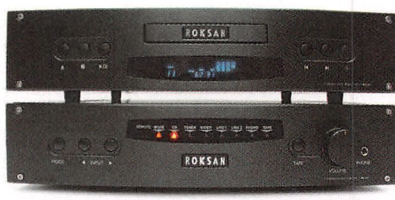
HD ready

http://www.pioneer.co.uk

The best of

ROKSAN

Technology



NEW Maths !!!

£650 + £650 = £1000

Maths - Illogical

Saving - Colossal

Experience - Emotional

AWARDS

★★★★★

CD player **INTEGRATED amp**

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Winner 2004 Award

Kandy MkIII CD
HI-FI CHOICE Bronze award 2004 Awards

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Winner 2003 Award

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Winner 2002 Award

Kandy MKIII integrated amplifier
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION October 2003

Kandy CD
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION First test July 2003

Kandy MKIII integrated amplifier
Five Stars
2003 SUPERTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION May 2003

Kandy Integrated amplifier
Five Stars
2002 SUPERTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Feb 2002

Kandy CD player, Amplifier & Speakers
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION January 2001

Kandy Integrated amplifier
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION April 2000

Kandy CD
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION March 2000

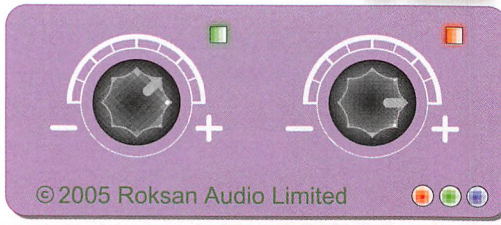
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK

CD player
INTEGRATED amp

HENLEY

HENLEY DESIGNS
Tel: 01235 511 166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

KANDY
For everyone



© 2005 Roksan Audio Limited

CRANE CRIMBO DEAL
Crane Audio's Oceana 3 surround system is now £600 (down from £800), while the Oceana 5 is just £840 (down from £1100). Crane has also extended its free home trial offer to 30 days. Check out *www.craneaudio.com*, or call 0870 4441056

PSP GAMES TO GO...:
Take advantage of the PSP's breathtakingly good picture with one of the latest batch of films released on the new UMD format. 28 Days Later, The Fifth Element, Predator and Daredevil are just some of the films due to be released in time for Christmas

WHAT'S NEW?

HI-FI

ECLIPSE GOES TO WORK ON ITS EGGS

ECLIPSE HAS RELEASED its next generation of time domain speakers, or 'TD' speakers as we're more used to calling them. The £1200-per-pair TD510s use one 10cm drive unit per cabinet, so at a stroke bypass the need for an electrical crossover as found on conventional rivals. They use an egg-shaped cabinet to minimise diffraction, and are made from a mineral-loaded resin for maximum rigidity. Available in white, silver and black, these are well worth an audition.

HOME CINEMA

MARANTZ GOES 1080P

AS FAR AS flagship DVD players go, Marantz's new DV9600 (£1500, pictured above) looks particularly impressive. Besides upscaling to 720p and 1080i, this brand new disc spinner is one of only a small selection of players on the current market capable of giving you a 1080p video signal.

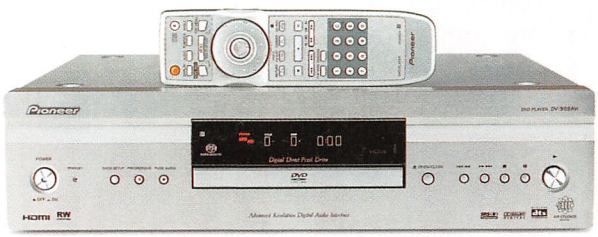
On its quest for the perfect picture, the DV9600 uses a high-grade 216MHz/14-bit video processor from Analogue Devices and is fitted with both an HDMI interface and a set of PAL/NTSC progressive scan-enabled component video outputs. Sonically, the Marantz shouldn't be too shabby either – offering you both SACD and DVD-Audio high-resolution and multichannel playback via its six-channel audio outputs or one of its two fitted Firewire connections.

FEBRUARY ISSUE – ON SALE THURS 12 JAN

Next month

How to set your **desk** on fire!

Serious speaker systems that will transform MP3 music and much more...



Take **movies** to the max

Supercharged new DVD players from all the big brands go head-to-head

Build your own **LCD** flatscreen

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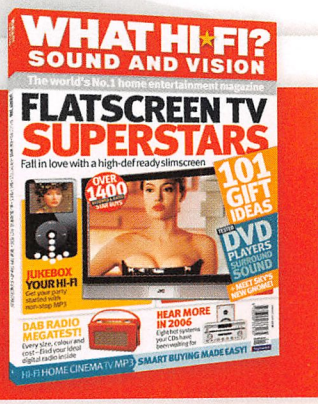

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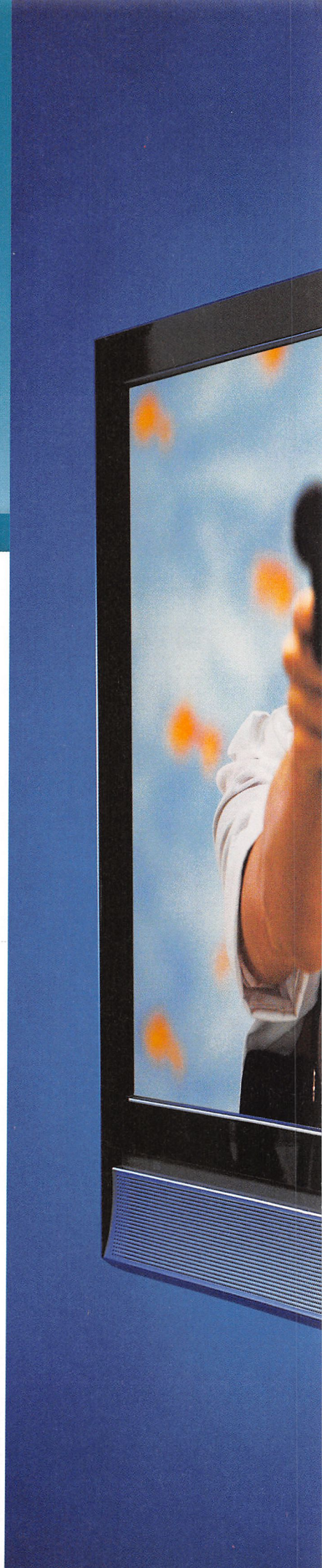
You don't need a huge room to savour the delights of High-Definition big-screen entertainment – these **37in flat TVs** give you them in a compact case

Supertest

THE UK'S ULTIMATE COMPARATIVE REVIEW **NO.355**

Fall in love with a high-def ready, 37in flatscreen



What's new?

Of the seven svelte screens selected here, we're familiar with only two: the corking Panasonic TH-37PV500 is our 2005 best-in-class Award-winner, while Philips' 37PF9830 emerged with credit from a *First Test* last month. The remaining five are new models from manufacturers with varying degrees of brand recognition in this country. And, of course, all seven are 37in models – itself a pretty new screen size. It's ideal for those who have reasonably sized rooms, but don't want them dominated by the telly.

What do you get for your money?

Six of these TVs are LCD designs, with only Panasonic backing plasma to deliver the goods. All are ready for the dawn of High-Definition TV, while there's a mix of digital (Freeview) and analogue tuners for today's viewing.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Wonder about your walls
Many folks envisage their chic new screen hanging on the wall – if that's your plan, check out the relative depth and weight of your chosen TV on our tech spec panels (see p48). Don't be afraid to shop around for alternative mounting kits – manufacturers' ones can often be expensive. And allow for a degree of swivel if you're determined to wall-mount your set – flatscreen televisions don't always have the widest viewing angles.

2 Wired for sound
Sometimes the biggest difference between TVs can be the sound performance – don't forget to give prospective purchases a good listen, as well as a good look, before you buy.

3 Let it scroll
In the shop, switch to one of the 24-hour news channels and have a look at the text scrolling across the bottom of the screen. Flatscreens can sometimes falter with motion tracking, and this is a rigorous test.

RATINGS EXPLAINED

Five stars tells you a TV delivers great pictures, good sound, and offers a degree of forward thinking. A four-star set is still a great TV that needs looking at, though it might not offer the value of the five-star models. Three stars indicates competent rather than impressive television performance. Two- and one-star TVs don't merit much attention.

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

"All seven of these sets are 37in models – a fairly new screen size – and are ideal for those of you with reasonably sized rooms you don't want dominated by your television"

JVC LT37DS6
£2100
Page 42

LG RZ-37LZ31
£1800
Page 42

Panasonic
TH-37PV500
£2300 Page 43

Philips 37PF9830
£2800
Page 43

Sharp LC-37GD7E
£2400
Page 45

Toshiba 37WLT58
£2100
Page 45

ViewSonic L3760W
£1250
Page 46

BUYER'S GUIDE

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p115

JVC LT37DS6

★★☆☆☆ £2100

AT LEAST THIS JVC differentiates itself from the same-again looks of its assembled competition: the price includes the two-tier glass stand not shown in the picture. It's sturdy enough, like the screen itself, and simple enough to put together. Whether it offers enough space for the equipment you might need to store on it is another question, but at least you've something tangible to show for your outlay.

Like its rivals, the LT37DS6 is laden with useful inputs and is reassuringly

> "Blacks lack detail – while movement is accompanied by constant picture noise"

well screwed together. The layout of the remote control is logical and, in conjunction with fast intuitive menus that don't overwrite the entire screen (and so make picture set-up straightforward), the JVC can be fine-tuned and ready to play in next to no time.

There was a time when nearly all bigger LCD screens displayed television broadcasts in the manner the LT37DS6 does. There's a mild 'frosted' appearance to pictures, which the lurid colour palette can't compensate for. Blacks lack a little detail, and movement is accompanied by more-or-less constant picture noise. Sound, though, is broader-beamed than most screens, which helps the sound from digital radio no end.

DVDs pictures are more successful. Though dark tones are still too uniform, the RGB Scart input delivers much more stable, much better-defined images than the tuner. And HDMI images are best of all: pictures carry plenty of detail, edges are crisply defined, and motion tracked confidently – dark tones are still bottomless, mind you, and complex, smoky scenes in *Crash* provoked inappropriate appearances by unwanted colours.

This is the least impressive TV here, though it's far from the least expensive. Even those glass shelves can't stop us telling you to spend your cash elsewhere.

FOR
Handy stand; impressive sound for a flatscreen; nice remote and good spec

AGAINST
Pictures, whether off-air, analogue or digital, leave something to be desired

VERDICT
Mere competence won't win sales: the JVC's picture quality isn't good enough in this company

The JVC's glass stand will turn a few heads, though the picture makes you turn away

LG RZ-37LZ31

★★★☆☆ £1800

QUITE OFTEN IN tests like this, several competing products look very similar on paper – it's manufacturers' ingenuity that results in the differences in performance. The Panasonic plasma is the sore thumb in this test – all the rest, including this LG, have similar specs. There's a DVI-D input, while the majority favour HDMI, but that shouldn't make much difference.

It's a blandly attractive, well-made screen and is logical enough to set up

> "Prospective owners of the LG might consider upgrading to an offboard Freeview box"

– we were mildly hampered by an enthusiastic remote that seemed to respond to aural suggestions as well as actual button-pushes, but we're prepared to believe the line that ours is an aberration.

The tuner is analogue-only, and presents a slightly edgy image, which is host to a little more image noise than we would like. Colours are natural enough, but rapid camera motion like sport can induce smearing. Prospective owners might consider upgrading to an offboard Freeview box. The sound can be a little approximate, too.

What really sets the RZ-37LZ31 apart from its rivals is DVD picture performance: perversely, we found that the most agreeable images were created using component video inputs. Transferred this way, *Fantastic Four* enjoyed stable, smooth motion-tracking, solid edge definition and minimal picture noise. Skin tones were natural, colours subtle, and detail plentiful. The DVI-D input, contrastingly, yielded a slightly jaundiced, chilly image that gave away a fair bit of detail and poise when compared to the component pictures.

Which goes to show the numbers are just the numbers. This LG, despite its on-paper similarity to its rivals, falls some ways short of the best TVs here.

FOR
Sterling performance from component inputs; price

AGAINST
Digital images are found wanting; tuner isn't the best

VERDICT
An unusual, if not entirely satisfactory, performance – hunt out a really good deal if you consider this LG

This is at the cheaper end of the range, and it delivers a fairly patchy performance

Panasonic TH-37PV500

★★★★★ £2300

HISTORICALLY, OUR FAVOURITE large screens have been plasmas. Well, the times they are a-becoming quite different: here's the only plasma product in a test dominated by LCD machines. We dished out a best-in-class gong to this screen in our *Awards 2005* issue, and 10 minutes in the company of these rivals demonstrates just how good this Panasonic is all over again.

Even in the showroom, the TH-37PV500 is a class-leader. It has the regulation substantial build quality, sophisticated looks, and comprehensive specification we've come to expect from Panasonic. And a pleasant remote.

> "Even in the showroom the Panasonic is the leader with its sophisticated good-looks"

Once you've punished your credit card and got it home, you'll find clear, logical menus that make setting it up the work of a moment.

The analogue and digital tuners fitted here are the most effective in this *Supertest*. Reception is, generally, very good: there's plenty of detail in dark tones, colours are natural and unforced, while contrast and depth of field are both fine. Rapid motion can upset edge-definition mildly, but that's about it for drawbacks – even the sound is decent, as a listen to several of the digital radio stations confirms.

And the good news keeps coming. RGB Scart images are detailed and insightful, and show greater poise and stability than any other screen here, while the HDMI input is better still. The Panasonic might 'only' have a screen resolution of 1024 x 720 but, in practice, it delivers vibrant, convincing images that combine excellent detail-retrieval, edge-definition and motion-tracking. The TH-37PV500 is gifted in every discipline, assembling a smashing image.

No doubt a screen will arrive that outperforms, out-poses and undercuts this Panasonic. We're not holding our breath, though – the TH-37PV500 looks set to rule this roost for a while yet.

FOR
Good tuners; splendid all-round picture; feels indulgently made

AGAINST
TV motion-tracking could be better still

VERDICT
Panasonic's Viera range is good from top to bottom, but this model might well be the star turn

Part of Panasonic's stunning Viera range, this plasma leaves the rest standing

Philips 37PF9830

★★★★☆ £2800

LOOK PRICEY WHEN you see it written down, doesn't it? Fortunately, Philips offers a few spoonsful of sugar to aid the financial medicine – to a stylish, good-looking screen, add a motorised stand, true High Definition progressive scan capability, the splendid Ambilight2 and Pixel Plus2 facilities, the weighty remote control, and the slickest set-up menus in the test.

And if that's not enough, you can add exemplary build quality into the mix.

> "This TV displays High Def images recorded in 1080i: and results are stunning!"

We reckon those credentials are more than enough to make the most expensive screen in this *Supertest* look fiercely competitive compared to some.

If anything, testing this screen in the company of its peers has made last month's *First Test* look even more prescient. There's no doubting the TV reception, in particular, isn't to a standard we'd expect: it's barefacedly noisy, and no amount of tweakery or Ambilight fiddling can stop colours being pale and wan. Nor is it the most stable here, or the best defined.

DVD performance is much more acceptable: even the most complex, fidgety scenes in *Kung Fu Hustle* are gripped determinedly, with the Ambilight feature contributing splendid depth of field. Colours, especially when using the HDMI input, are vital and well-balanced, and there's decent insight into gloomy scenes. Sound is nicely weighty and defined, better than any other here.

Only this set displays High-Def images recorded in 1080p as standard. The results are very good – unnervingly three-dimensional in some cases. But video content in this resolution is rare at the moment, and it's this far-sighted future-proofing that Philips want you to pay the bulk of that price premium for. Right now, the Panasonic's a better buy.

FOR
Truly, deeply futureproof; long list of goodies; decent sound; fine HDMI pictures

AGAINST
Tuner is mediocre; looks expensive despite the spec

VERDICT
If you're happy to pay for deferred performance, look no further. If you're not, this Philips is great, but not quite flawless

This set will show 1080p pictures in their full glory, if you can find any

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Sharp LC-37GD7E

★★★★☆ £2400

SUCH IS THE lack of scope for designers to express themselves where flatscreen TVs are concerned, we were, briefly, childishly excited by the sight of this new Sharp's moody titanium finish. Lightheaded at being momentarily freed from shiny silver surrounds, we resolved to make the LC-37GD7E the winner of this *Supertest*. On reflection, though, we decided a thorough test would be the professional thing to do.

On the shelf, and on the spec page, the Sharp looks the part. The remote

> "This Sharp has got bags of showroom appeal, and it excels in some departments"

control might be an odd, clumsy design, and the labyrinthine (and comprehensive) set-up menus are not entirely intuitive, but bringing the LC-37GD7E to readiness doesn't take long.

Off-air images, both analogue and digital, are afflicted by the same screen-door effect as the JVC, but to a lesser extent. There's a slight softness and lack of definition to images, accompanied by some digital noise and occasional

FOR
Looks good; fine HDMI pictures

AGAINST
Bit pricey; less-than-ideal set-up rigmarole; off-air images are lacking

VERDICT
A little too little, a little too late: the Sharp excels in some areas but is found wanting against the very best

Pictures via HDMI are excellent, with great colour balance and fine detail to be seen

bleaching. Colour balance, though, and depth of field are passable, as is contrast. It's a patchy performance overall, then.

Showing *Crash* through the RGB Scart input, the Sharp is much more impressive. Depth of field is convincingly three-dimensional, black scenes retain decent levels of detail and motion is tracked far more effectively. But the previously well-judged colour palette becomes a little overdriven, strangely, and the tendency to over-expose smoky or dusty scenes is still apparent.

HDMI images remove the remaining shortcomings. Poised, natural colours and an excellent facility with contrast grant pictures much-needed anima, while utterly stable motion-tracking makes for convincingly cinematic viewing. This Sharp has got it where it counts, and looks good in the showroom. Yet it still can't compete with the best around.

Toshiba 37WLT58

★★★★☆ £2100

WE'RE SLIGHTLY PERTURBED by Toshiba's model hierarchy where LCD TVs are concerned. Ostensibly very similar to the five-star 37WL56 we *First Test*-ed last September, this model adds £100 to the price in exchange for a digital TV tuner, component video inputs, and a second HDMI input – are there enough customers to make two same-size models viable? Maybe Toshiba knows.

The 37WLT58 certainly looks and feels the money's-worth – only the

> "This Toshiba set adds a digital tuner, along with no less than two HDMI sockets"

remote control strikes a low-rent note. And, as Toshiba is the unofficial champion of set-up menus, getting the screen up and running is dead easy.

The 37WLT58 receives a very stable TV picture, which features good skin tones and great depth of field. Even darker scenes are reasonably detailed, but picture noise is more-or-less constantly present in varying degrees of extremity. Edge definition is,

FOR
Looks and feels nice; great picture stability; good spec and a doddle to set up

AGAINST
Noisy TV pictures; plenty of picture softness apparent; weedy sound

VERDICT
TV reception aside, the Tosh doesn't do much wrong – but it can't match the leaders

This is another example of a good product struggling in a competitive market

simultaneously, a little sloppy and a little coarse – not an easy effect to achieve.

Much more rewarding are DVD pictures. RGB Scart images are stable, well-defined and coherent: colours are wide-ranging and believable, and edge-definition loses some coarseness.

Using an HDMI input brings more grip and authority to bear: motion-tracking and depth of field are both at their best using this method, and contrast is as lifelike as can be. Despite all this, though, the Tosh can't rid its pictures of the last vestige of that unwelcome softness.

Through any input, the sound is thin and breathless – only the ViewSonic is less agreeable in audio terms.

This Toshiba's a decent, worthwhile device, but only the very best can flourish in a market as competitive as this one.

ViewSonic L3760W

★★★★☆ £1250

IT'S BEEN MORE than 10 years since the first ViewSonic products made their way into Europe, and the American firm has made steady, if stealthy, progress since then. We reviewed a couple of its LCD screens last year and found them to be solid value. The L3760w has picked up that baton of respectability and run with it.

It's a tidy, anonymous design that's acceptably assembled, though you would never mistake the quality of

> "It's a tidy, anonymous set – but you wouldn't mistake the build for the Panasonic"

build for that of the Panasonic. The only let-down in terms of spec is the analogue-only tuner. Inputs cover all the up-to-the-minute bases, and the remote control is as concise and uncomplicated as the on-screen set-up menus. In fact, there's greater picture adjustability here than with most rivals.

More than by build quality, the ViewSonic betrays its cost-orientated limitations by the quality of the off-air signal it reproduces. The overall signature is soft and slushy: not as prone to noise as the JVC, but smeary with motion. Static scenes show a pleasingly neutral colour balance and reasonable edge-definition, though blacks lack detail.

Things look up a lot when we switch to an RGB Scart-generated viewing of *Fantastic Four*. Blacks are still a bit featureless, but the picture is much crisper (especially where movement is concerned). Edges look sharper and picture noise is nothing like as intrusive. Disappointingly, the HDMI input is only marginally better: dark scenes are better detailed and skin tones look their best, but digital noise isn't eradicated and smoky scenes can flare uncomfortably.

It's by no means perfect, but the L3760w is prodigious value for money. Ally it to a Sky+ or Freeview receiver, bypassing its own iffy tuner, and bask in the knowledge of money saved.

FOR
Doesn't feel built down to a price; decent DVD reproduction, especially via analogue inputs

AGAINST
Digital input doesn't impress; tuner is rough, frankly

VERDICT
There are better screens in this test, but they're much more expensive – the ViewSonic is an authentic bargain

Bearing in mind there are sets over twice this one's price, it's not bad

KNOW HOW HOW TO ENJOY HIGH-DEF

(1) Buy the correct television

There's a Europe-wide industry standard for High-Definition television, and those sets that conform are allowed to carry the HD-Ready logo (right). Beware of sneaky imitations like 'HD-specified' – we've already seen such misleading labels.

All HD-Ready TVs must have a native resolution of at least 720 horizontal lines, otherwise, High Definition transmissions are off the menu. Your new 720-line display will also be able to show – though not quite to its maximum effect – any broadcasts made in 1080i (1080 lines interlaced).

The resolution you see on your TV is decided by the broadcaster: for example, it's likely you'll see football in 720p, and natural history in 1080i. The progressive scan (p) shows motion better, while the interlaced (i) image can offer more detail.

An HD-Ready TV also includes an HDMI or DVI input that supports content protection (HDCP) and component video inputs. The first digiboxes from Sky and Telewest will probably incorporate component connections as well as all-digital outputs, but we reckon it won't be long before boxes will move to HDMI-only outputs in an effort to provide the copy-protection that big content providers (Hollywood movie companies, mostly) demand.

(2) Get an HD set-top box

We're still waiting to see a UK-spec integrated HDTV, but they'll be along in due course. In the meantime, you'll require a set-top box to watch High-Def broadcasts. Sky's digibox is imminent, and will include a useful hard-disk recorder. This will provide the same brilliant flexibility and functionality as its existing Sky+ box, and will have the reverse-compatibility to receive standard-definition Sky TV content (see *News*, p32, for the latest on Sky's projected High Def broadcasts).

In addition to the spectacular picture quality, High-Def transmissions will offer surround sound, too. Many of Sky's broadcasts will offer Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound – movies will sound as good as those on DVD (at least until Blu-Ray and HD DVD finally emerge in 2006).

> "It won't be long before HD products like this Sky box leap out of pages into our homes"

Fans of projectors will be able to join in, too. There are already dozens of HD-Ready projectors on sale in this country – and most of them have been reviewed in previous issues of this magazine (see the *Buyer's Guide*, starting on p115). And in addition to the flatscreens in this test, there are HD-Ready rear-projection TVs available too. If you have the space in your home, huge images (55in+) can be had at bargain prices from these products.

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FACTS AND FIGURES

	SCREEN SIZE (IN)	ASPECT RATIO	RESOLUTION	PROGRESSIVE SCAN	HDMI/DVI IN	COMPONENT IN	SCART IN	S-VIDEO IN	PHONO IN	DIGITAL TUNER	PHOTOCARD READER	CONTRAST RATIO	DIMENSIONS (HWD)	WEIGHT (KG)
JVC LT37DS6	37	16:9	1366x768									800:1	63x93x11	26
£2100 www.jvc.co.uk 020 8450 3282														

★★☆☆☆ PICTURE Disappointing compared to the LT-32DS6 we tested in December, and off the pace in this company.

★★★☆☆ SOUND Decent weight (in fact, almost too bassy) gives body to TV, films and radio alike.

★★★★☆ FEATURES High-Def ready, as they all are. Fast, logical set-up menus.

LG RZ-37LZ31	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●				16:9	62x108x13	26
£1800 www.lg.co.uk 01753 500400														

★★★☆☆ PICTURE Surprisingly good component pictures make other images a bit of a let-down.

★★★☆☆ SOUND Lacks reach and weight, sounds unrealistic. Good and loud, though.

★★★☆☆ FEATURES No digital tuner, and DVI-D rather than HDMI input.

PANASONIC TH-37PV500	37	16:9	1024x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		3000:1	67x104x14	35
£2300 www.panasonic.co.uk 08705 357357														

★★★★★ PICTURE Offers the best all-round performance, despite its comparatively low on-paper resolution.

★★★★☆ SOUND Surprisingly well balanced, and provides good amounts of detail.

★★★★☆ FEATURES Best tuners in the test, easy to set up and boasts plenty of connectivity.

PHILIPS 37PF9830	37	16:9	1920x1080	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	5000:1	68x113x10	28
£2800 www.philips.co.uk 08709 009070														

★★★★☆ PICTURE Runs the gamut: analogue-only tuner isn't great, 1080p images certainly are.

★★★★☆ SOUND Good definition, impressive separation and impact.

★★★★★ FEATURES Even among HD-Ready kit, this specification is the most farsighted in this test.

SHARP LC-37GD7E	37	16:9	1366x768	●					●	●			64x80x7	?
£2400 www.sharp.co.uk 08001 3875051														

★★★★☆ PICTURE HDMI looks the part, but tuner performance isn't up to the price.

★★★☆☆ SOUND Just like a flatscreen TV – that's not a compliment.

★★★★☆ FEATURES Fully competitive specification, but complex menus and a downright odd remote.

TOSHIBA 37WLT58	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			67x91x11	22
£2100 www.toshiba.co.uk 08704 424424														

★★★★☆ PICTURE Movies look good, if a little soft – tuner's not the best.

★★★☆☆ SOUND Lacks composure, sound breathless – loud, though.

★★★★★ FEATURES Similar in most regards to most rivals in this test, but the Toshiba includes two HDMI inputs

VIEWSONIC L3760W	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●			800:1	73x96x12	25
£1250 www.viewsoniceurope.com/uk 0141 474000														

★★★★☆ PICTURE Tuner is best ignored, but movie performance belies the price.

★★★☆☆ SOUND Unspectacular, undemonstrative but inoffensive.

★★★☆☆ FEATURES Adequate at the price, especially as you'll sack the analogue-only tuner anyway.

ASPECT RATIO The physical proportions of a screen or image – it's the ratio of height and width. 16:9 is the common widescreen format.
RESOLUTION The number of pixels used to generate the picture. TVs need at least 720 for the second figure, the number of lines vertically, to produce a High Definition picture. However, resolution is not automatically an indicator of picture quality.
PROGRESSIVE SCAN A method of producing higher-quality picture for flatscreens from DVDs.
HDMI/DVI-D The latest and highest-quality all-digital connection for taking a video-only (DVI-D) or video and audio (HDMI) signal from a compatible source such as a DVD player. The two are compatible with the necessary adapters.
COMPONENT A high-quality method of transferring video signal to the TV from a source. Superior to Scart/S-Video.
S-VIDEO Older video-transfer standard that's not as good as component or digital.
COMPOSITE The weakest method of transferring pictures to your display you'll encounter on modern home cinema and television kit.
PHONO INPUT Lets you play audio from another source out of your TV's speakers.
DIGITAL TUNER In the past, every television was equipped with an analogue tuner, to view terrestrial TV channels. Now Freeview has become more popular, manufacturers are including built-in digital tuners with their models. All these have analogue tuners built-in, too.
PHOTOCARD READER Lets you view images by plugging the memory card from your camera straight into the TV. Check that the TV and camera use the same type of card.
CONTRAST RATIO Gives an indication of contrast quality

NEXT BIG THING We'll be testing **Sky's funky new Gnome** receiver next issue – it could be a great alternative to DAB radio for satellite TV users

Sky's the limit for satellite radio

'GNOME' – LET'S BE honest: it's not the first name we'd have chosen. But however eccentric its title, Sky's newest toy scores well for desirability, its 'cool blue' or 'funky orange' trim lending it a fun – and slightly Fisher Price – feel.

The £70 Gnome is a digital audio receiver. It's small, portable, wireless and battery-powered, and works by streaming sound directly from your Sky box. Use it to listen to the radio or keep up with the match commentary from anywhere in your home (range is up to 30m). It's available any day now...

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Group Test

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Hi-fi systems to put life in your CDs and a smile on your face

What's new?

It's that time of year when we ask manufacturers to supply CD player, amplifier, and a pair of speakers (or their choice if they don't make them) to make a complete hi-fi system. The result is eight carefully assembled systems across three price bands. You'll see plenty of 2005 Award-winners, such as the KEF iQ5 speakers or Primare electronics. There are plenty of impressive components we've tested before, as well as new budget kit from Marantz and Mordaunt-Short, plus high-end debuts from Art and Densen. We'll do the unpacking, setting up, and running in. You just sit back and read.

> "We'll do the unpacking, setting up, and running in: you just sit back and read"

What do you get for your money?

Each system comes with the electronics and speakers necessary to play your CD collection. However, you should budget 20 percent of your total for cables, a hi-fi rack and, in some instances, speaker stands. See p69 for recommendations.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Look around you
Before you head to the dealers, look at your listening room. Note down not only size, but also characteristics such as furnishings and location of doors and windows. This all helps a (knowledgeable) dealer suggest a system.

2 Think ahead
More and more music is being stored on MP3 players, like Apple's iPod, so check out how your prospective system sounds with the addition of a portable player. But don't expect your iPod to sound anywhere near as good as even the cheapest CD player here.

3 Cable jump
Make sure the dealer's not demo'ing kit using unrealistically expensive cables. They do affect sound, so audition with wires you plan to use and can afford.

4 You be the DJ
Don't let the dealer take over the demo. Take your own music, however embarrassing, and use familiar tunes to make comparisons.

3 Shaken or stirred?
Don't only look at star ratings: complete hi-fi systems are like cocktails... sometimes the most unlikely concoctions hit the right spot.

RATINGS EXPLAINED

Each system has been awarded an overall rating, according to how well it fits together. There are also ratings for each component, which shows how they stand up on their own. The five-star systems and products are the best all-rounders, but look seriously at the four-star products and systems: they could be better for your specific needs

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

THE CONTENDERS

Marantz/Mordaunt-Short
£500
Page 55

Cambridge Audio/Epos
£850
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Roksan/KEF
£1400
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Creek/Epos
£2150
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Cyrus/Spendor
£2295
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Primare/ProAc
£4400
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Densen/Art
£7000
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Naim/Dynaudio
£7805
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Marantz and Mordaunt-Short are two very well-respected names in budget hi-fi

Marantz CD5001
★★★★★ £180

Marantz PM4001
★★★★★ £170

Mordaunt-Short Avant 902i
★★★★★ £150

Marantz/Mordaunt-Short
★★★★★ £500

IN A WORLD where a £10 note barely runs to a pint of flat lager and a glass of acidic wine, it's comforting to know that £500 still buys a proper 'beat-the-sonic-pants-off-any-micro-system' hi-fi.

Sure, that's 50 over-priced drinks orders, but look at what incredible value your money buys: the Marantz electronics, looking dandy in smart silver, snugly fitting jackets, could cost double their respective tags – fit and finish impresses, and the chunky amp weighs in at a reassuring 7kg.

Speakers are a fine choice

The Mordaunt-Short 902is' presence also offers no cause for complaint. Indeed, these little monitors would grace any living room, regardless of stamp duty.

As for features, the Marantz player is well decked out, including CD text, digital outputs, and (somewhat strangely for a non-DJ CD player) a pitch control.

The PM4001 integrated amp offers every teenage music fan's favourite option – purists look away now – the 'loudness' button, to boost the frequency extremes. More usefully, this budget design includes a phono stage for vinyl.

Spin some silver discs on this £500 wonder system and, regardless of the loudness button, loud is certainly an option, too. The amp, unlike some of its forebears, avoids wallowing in bass – even when cranked up, low notes manage to stay surprisingly well defined.

> "Marantz's new budget amp even includes a phono stage for vinyl"

Both the amp and CD player also deliver a more exciting and rhythmic performance than we've recently heard from Marantz's budget kit. At higher volumes, admittedly, treble hardens a touch – giving the 902is' aluminium dome tweeters a long run-in is essential to minimise this – but, for the money, we're not going to make a drama out of nothing.

Perhaps the greatest example, though, of how much you get for your money is shown when you play dynamic recordings. Spin stirring classical pieces, such as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, and the system ups its game, presenting you with an expansive soundstage, as well as exciting orchestral crescendos.

Classical causes no problems

It's with precisely such music that most micro-systems flounder, finding themselves incapable of stretching above or below their 'safe' frequency range settings.

If you want to hear your music sounding as good as it can – for the money – this system does just that. Okay, so we're not overly impressed with the results of the loudness button – it's more of an 'annoy the neighbours' button – but otherwise this sparkling Marantz/Mordaunt-Short cocktail really hits the spot. You'll be stirred, not shaken.

FOR
Value for money in buckets and spades; big, musical delivery annihilates rival micro systems

AGAINST
For the money, it's nigh on impossible to fault – just a touch of hardness at higher volumes

VERDICT
Want proper hi-fi for just five hundred quid? Check out this trio

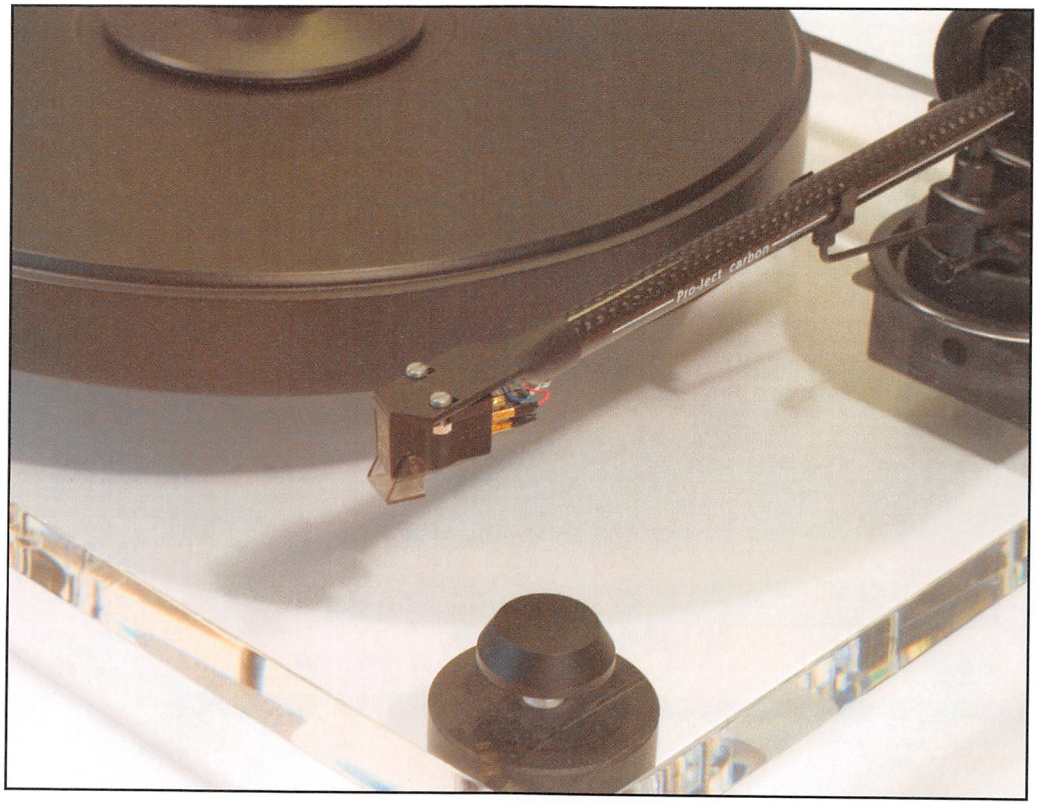
TECH SPECS

CD5001
CD PLAYER
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS Phono
DIGITAL OUTPUTS Coaxial, optical
DIGITAL INPUT No
HEADPHONES Yes
HDCD No
CD TEXT Yes
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF Yes
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

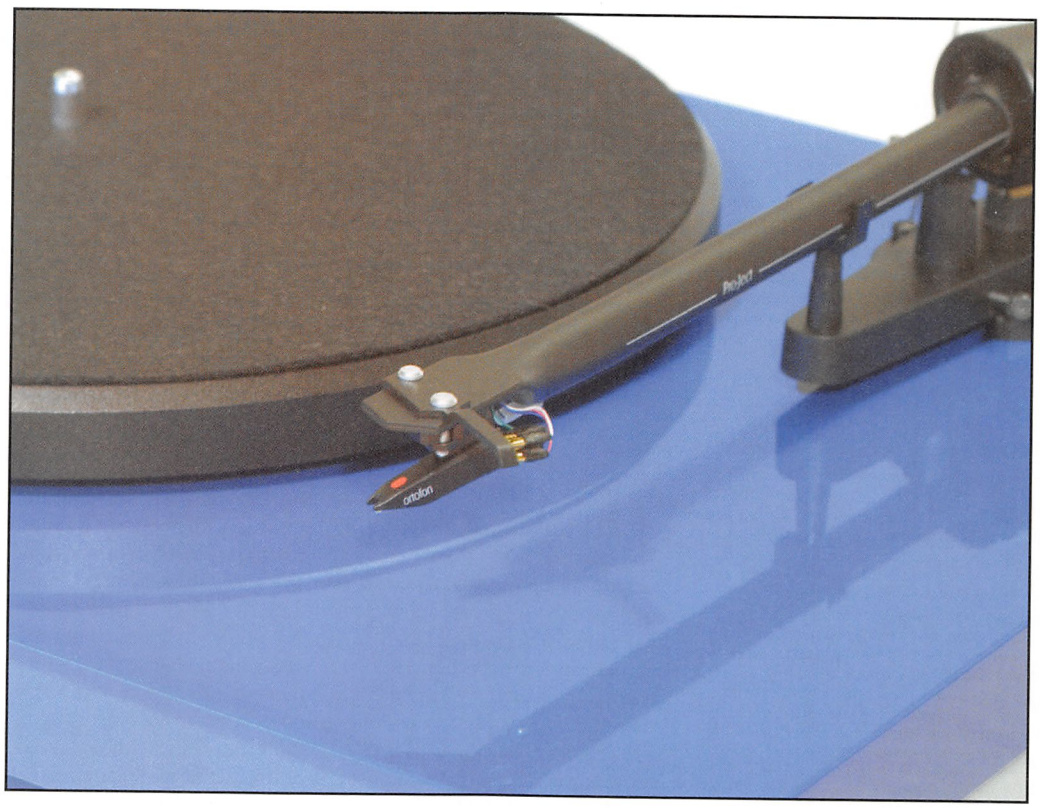
PM4001
INTEGRATED AMP
POWER OUTPUT 55w per channel
LINE LEVEL INPUTS 5
PHONO STAGE Yes
TAPE LOOPS 2
PREAMP OUT Yes
SPEAKERS 2 pairs
TONE CONTROLS Yes
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

902i
SPEAKERS
TYPE Standmount
SENSITIVITY 89dB
IMPEDANCE 4-8 ohms
MAX POWER 100w
BIWIRABLE Yes
FINISHES 3

The colouration's in the finish



Not in the music



Pro-Ject
AUDIO SYSTEMS

Distributed by: Henley Designs
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Cambridge Audio Azur 640C V2
★★★★★ £250

Cambridge Audio Azur 640A
★★★★★ £250

Epos M5
★★★★★ £350

Those small Epos M5s won't overwhelm you with bass, but they're thoroughly good

Cambridge Audio/Epos
★★★★★ £850

HAVING JUST RAVED about the £500 Marantz/Mordaunt-Short combination, we're (sort of) going to suggest you give it a miss. But – and this is a Peter Crouch-tall 'but' – only if you can find the extra £350 to buy this Cambridge Audio/Epos arrangement.

That £350 extra cash doesn't buy significantly better build – though the speakers are solid little fellows, and the electronics are acceptably well made. In fact, the greatest step-up in class comes with the tasty remote.

Extra money is well spent

Something that your extra greens does secure is an increase in sonic flair. The Cambridge pair, both five-star Award winners, blitz similarly priced separate rivals, offering an incredibly refined performance for the money. Even better, they work best when paired with each other, which is not always the case with hi-fi kit.

FOR
Energetic, forceful electronics make the most of sweet and punchy Epos speakers; looks

AGAINST
Epos standmounts don't offer the same bass reach as bigger rivals

VERDICT
One of the best sub-£1000 systems in town, this energetic sounding set-up offers stunning value for money

Stick any half-decent speakers on the end of these budget-priced maestros, and upper, mid and lower frequencies perfectly complement one another, avoiding sounding bright or woolly.

The key is the even tonal balance that Cambridge Audio has carefully created. So, when you introduce a pair of speakers as capable as these Epos M5s – they're also five-star favourites of ours – the result is a system that excels with any music.

> "The Cambridge pair, both five-star Award winners, offer real flair"

The trio delivers even Madonna's ever-so-compressed *Confessions on a Dance Floor* with interest (come on Madge, forget toning up long enough to tone down that invasively aggressive treble). Switch to Elvis Costello's beautifully produced *North*, and the result is a gloriously realistic mid-range. The system proudly delivers Costello's rich tones with good authority, and there's plenty detail, too. Consequently the most intimate details of Mr E.C's careful song writing are laid bare.

Up the pace with Holst's *Planets* suite, and this budget system demonstrates athletic dynamics, and punchy bass. Don't expect Inspector Gadget-like bass reach – the speakers' moderate size restricts the deep stuff – but it all stays firm.

Words of praise aren't enough

You must reckon we've just slipped into hyperbole overdrive – well, it's easy to heap praise on this set-up, but only because it sounds so good.

If you want it in context, then look at it this way: does this £850 system sound as good as, say, the £4400 Primare/ProAc system (p63)? No, it doesn't – but does that otherwise excellent arrangement sound five times better? Nope – which has to make this terrific budget system a bona-fide bargain.

If you want a three-figure 'hi-fi' you must audition this set-up. There's little like it under £1000.

TECH SPECS

AZUR 640CV2
CD PLAYER
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS Phono
DIGITAL OUTPUT Coaxial, optical
DIGITAL INPUTS No
HEADPHONES No
HDCD No
CD TEXT No
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF No
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

AZUR 640A
INTEGRATED AMP
POWER OUTPUT 65w per channel
LINE LEVEL INPUTS 5
PHONO STAGE No
TAPE LOOPS 2
PREAMP OUT No
SPEAKERS 2 pairs
TONE CONTROLS Yes
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

M5
SPEAKERS
TYPE Standmount
SENSITIVITY 87dB
IMPEDANCE 4 ohms
MAX POWER-HANDLING 100w
BIWIRABLE Yes
FINISHES 3

ONE-MAKE HI-FI SYSTEMS

Roksan Kandy MkIII player
★★★★½ £650

Roksan Kandy MkIII amp
★★★★½ £650

KEF iQ5
★★★★★ £400

Roksan's black electronics look particularly cool, while a £300 price saving also appeals

Roksan/KEF (including discount)

★★★★★ £1400

SALT AND VINEGAR, turkey and cranberry – er, Peter and Jordan? Some combinations, even the most unlikely ones, just work.

To that list, now add Roksan Kandy electronics and KEF iQ5 speakers. But before we talk sound, let's discuss our second-favourite subject, money. Roksan's splendid 'Twin Pack' offer means that when you buy both a Kandy amp and a Kandy CD player you pay just £1000, saving a chunky £300 on the kit's individual prices.

Add KEF's iQ5 floorstanding speakers, and you have a combination that walks tall even when approaching the £1500 price level.

We can smell a good deal

So how does it sound? Well, as we said, some unlikely combos work, and though these KEF floorstanding speakers aren't the biggest boxes in town, hook them up to the intimidatingly muscular Kandy amp, and the result is an incredibly powerful sound.

Demo the kit using something good and loud – *Immigration Song* from Led Zeppelin's *Remasters* ticks all the right boxes – and the tune pounds out with rhythm and force. The bass and drums crack out with hard-edged definition, while the system reaches impressively low. The throbbing bass riff that powers this forbidding Led Zep number flashes along with excellent timing, and even better definition. It's lovely stuff!

> "Bass and drums crack out with deep definition that's impressively low"

These KEFs are seriously capable speakers – they are, if you didn't know, our 2005 Product of the Year winners. Close your eyes, and you'll envisage a far bigger pair of towers on the end of the electronics.

Backing up all this fun is the impressive Kandy CD player. It's always been a detailed and swift performer, and has always worked well with its stablemate amplifier.

Downsides to the system? If we were being extra picky, we would ask for a touch more treble refinement – it's occasionally a touch ragged at the top end. However, for the money, we're very happy. It's a flexible set-up, too, and the KEF iQ5s can happily sit within half a metre or so of your rear wall, without the sound deteriorating.

Unusual driver arrangement

KEF's tried-and-tested Uni-Q driver array – which places the tweeter inside the main mid/bass driver in a concentric pattern – work well to spreads the sound wide, meaning you don't need to worry overly about toe-in.

So, you get a great price and classy sound, but here's the icing on this especially moist cake – fit and finish are top drawer. The iQ5s' curved cabinets add style, while Roksan's electronics are solid as granite, and look great. If you have £1400, spend it here.

FOR
Thrilling presentation, with bags of detail and good pace; muscular amp pounds out the KEF's firm bass; great build quality

AGAINST
Doesn't offer quite the same refinement of some rivals

VERDICT
The Roksan Twin Pack offer saves you £300, making this exciting system more tempting

TECH SPECS

KANDY MKIII CD PLAYER
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS Phono
DIGITAL OUTPUT Coaxial
DIGITAL INPUT No
HEADPHONES No
HDCD No
CD TEXT No
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF No
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

KANDY MKIII INTEGRATED AMP
POWER OUTPUT 120w per channel
LINE LEVEL INPUTS 5
PHONO STAGE Yes
TAPE LOOPS 1
PREAMP OUT Yes
SPEAKERS 1 pair
TONE CONTROLS No
FINISHES 2

iQ5 SPEAKERS
TYPE Floorstander
SENSITIVITY 88dB
IMPEDANCE 8 ohms
MAX POWER-HANDLING 130w
BIWIRABLE Yes
FINISHES 8

NEC. No compromise. No equal

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Empowered by Innovation NEC

Creek CD50 Mk2
★★★★☆ £850

Creek Classic 5350SE
★★★★☆ £850

Epos M12.2
★★★★★ £450

Creek insists that an imminent make-over will help the the electronics' casings to match

Creek/Epos
★★★★☆ £2150

IN THE PAST, we've criticised Creek for a lack of visual matching in its range, but before we deliver another dressing-down for the lack of dressing-up, Creek has already formulated its defence.

Enclosed with this review kit was a letter explaining its range plans – the 5350SE amp sports the 'Classic' look and in the New Year, the CD50 Mk2 spinner gets a matching upgrade. The spec stays the same so, for now, we'll just shut our eyes and open our ears.

Epos speakers can handle it

Now, Creek's choice of partnering speakers doesn't cause much in the way of surprise – the company owns the Epos speaker brand, and the respective ranges are tuned with each other in mind. Hence the choice of the Epos M12.2s.

However, we were a little bit surprised at the significant price difference between electronics and speakers. More about that later...

We've found these Epos monitors work beautifully well on a pair of Epos's own speaker stands – keep it in the company, eh? – and, suitably warmed up, this system instantly gets your feet tapping. We've often praised the M12.2's swift, rhythmic ability, and the partnering electronics also display impressive fleetness of foot. Demo *God Only Knows* from

> "The system catches all the quirky percussion of Beach Boys' "

the Beach Boys's seminal *Pet Sounds* set, and the system delivers this wonderfully 'alive' tune correctly and effortlessly, catching all the quirky percussion and complex vocal arrangements.

Switch to a track with a little more polish, such as Kate Bush's *Aerial*, and the kit continues to deliver a neat, detailed soundstage.

It's all looking, and sounding, pretty good for this system – great pace and detail can go a long way in hi-fi terms, and the smooth, slightly warm-sounding electronics make the ideal partners for the ever-so-lean sounding speakers.

This package does, however, have a bit of an Achilles heel – switch to more forceful tunes, such as Faithless's *Mass Destruction*, and the equipment doesn't quite capture the aggression or insistency of the tune. Everything sounds clear and swift, but lacks the snap of, say, the Roksan/KEF pairing.

More snap and crackle please

Now, at a lower price this wouldn't be a major issue, but we're talking about a two-grand-plus bill once you've shelled out for Creek and Epos kit combined. Consequently this hi-fi team loses a star.

As we alluded to earlier, this system seems a little out of kilter, with the speakers costing £400 less than either the amplifier or CD player. Yet it doesn't sound sonically misaligned, which leads us to deduce the problem is the slightly expensive electronics. Shame!

FOR
Rhythmic sound, with impressive detail; smooth electronics will complement the lean-ish speakers

AGAINST
Lacks the knockout punch and weight we expect at this price level

VERDICT
They're polished performers, but could do with a gym workout to add a dose of aggression

TECH SPECS

CD50 MK2
CD PLAYER
ANALOGUE INPUTS Phono
DIGITAL OUTPUTS Coaxial, digital
DIGITAL INPUTS No
HEADPHONES No
HDCD No
CD TEXT Yes
MEMORY No
DISPLAY OFF No
REMOTE Yes
FINISH Silver

CLASSIC 5350SE
INTEGRATED AMP
POWER OUTPUT 90w per channel
LINE LEVEL INPUTS 5
PHONO STAGE No
TAPE LOOP 1
PREAMP OUT Yes
SPEAKERS 2 pairs
TONE CONTROLS No
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES Silver

M12.2
SPEAKERS
TYPE Two-way standmount
DRIVERS 25mm, 12cm wool/bread composite
SENSITIVITY 87dB
IMPEDANCE 8 ohm
MAX POWER-HANDLING 120w
BIWIRABLE Yes
FINISHES 3
SIZE (HWD) 38 x 20 x 25cm
WEIGHT 8kg

Cyrus CD6s ★★★★★ £650

Cyrus 8vs ★★★★★ £850

Spendor S3e ★★★★★ £795

We've long been fans of these great Cyrus boxes, and the Spendors are impressive, too

Cyrus/Spendor

★★★★★ £2295

GATHER ROUND, CHILDREN, and look at the cute little Cyrus boxes, and the sweet little Spendor floor-standing speakers – this must be a hi-fi system for little people?

Yes, this is a 'little' system, but that's only to look at – *not* to listen to. Traditionally, both Cyrus and Spendor excel at getting surprisingly big noises from remarkably small boxes, and this set-up helps maintain this convention.

Half-size set-up has big sound

Even so, this system wouldn't be ideal for a vast barn conversion – it lacks the scale for really big listening rooms – and the S3es don't plumb the bass depths that a humungous pair of towers would. However, you'll be astonished at the sound this kit can produce – there's lots of low stuff going on, sufficient to wake, if not the dead, then certainly the neighbours.

FOR

Hugely rhythmic performance; oodles of detail and finesse; dynamics; compact size to the loudspeakers and the electronics

AGAINST

Some might find it a touch lean and lacking bass

VERDICT

The Arsene Wenger of our test: correct, urbane, dashing and a strangely addictive listen with even the dullest material

There's also a steadfastly locked soundstage. Indeed, this set-up majors in accuracy, and from the amount of detail on offer, to the precise instrument placement, you get the impression you're listening to extremely conscientious hi-fi.

Don't, however, think that this all-British offering is repressed or staid – spin some bumpin' hip-hop from Cypress Hill's *Stoned Raiders* set, and the rhythmic Cyrus pair

> "The superbly rhythmic Cyrus pairing delivers as compelling sound as any"

combines with the more laid-back Spendors to deliver as drivingly compelling a listen as practically any rival here. Only the comparative lack of bass might disappoint.

What doesn't let you down is the Spendor pair's sweet-as-honey treble and midrange and, if you love intimate vocals – along the lines of Nina Simone's – this team works wonders. Loads of detail and a refined midrange all add up to hugely authentic-sounding tunes. These are what you might describe as connoisseur's speakers and, as with many delicacies, it might take those used to a less refined, more straightforward presentation a little while to appreciate their special skills. However, in time, you should love the little S3es.

Small can be beautiful

So, given this sonic excellence, it would be wrong to claim this system is bound by musical genres. However, we suggest that if you continually crank the volume dial up and survive on a diet of dirty rock'n'roll, you might consider the Roksan/KEF combo. If, however, you love beautifully timed tunes, dripping with detail, then this system is a compelling choice.

Don't forget, also, the simple upgrade path offered by Cyrus's external PSX-R power supplies. Oh, and did we say the system's quite little, so doesn't need much room space? Oh, we did, didn't we? Don't go too close, though, kids... these little boxes can bite.

TECH SPECS

CD6S
CD PLAYER
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS Phono
DIGITAL OUTPUTS Coaxial, digital
DIGITAL INPUTS No
HEADPHONES No
HDCD No
CD TEXT Yes
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF Yes
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

8vs
INTEGRATED AMP
POWER OUTPUT 70w per channel
LINE LEVEL INPUTS 6
PHONO STAGE No
TAPE LOOPS 1
PREAMP OUT Yes
SPEAKERS 2 pairs
TONE CONTROLS No
REMOTE Yes
FINISHES 2

S3e
SPEAKERS
TYPE Standmount
SENSITIVITY 84dB
IMPEDANCE 8 ohms
MAX POWER-HANDLING 125w
BIWIRABLE Yes
FINISHES 2

The Sound of Japan

CR-505DAB: *"We're impressed with Onkyo's CD / DAB micro system"*
DS-A1: *"The Onkyo dock gives a heftier, more detailed sound than a cable can"*
September 2005

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

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Onkyo was Japan's No.1 Brand selling mini systems (width 201mm-301mm) in 2004. *(Based on the sales reports of 3,500 retailers in Japan 2004 - Source Gfk Marketing Service Japan Ltd)*

Primare CD31
★★★★★ £1500

Primare I30
★★★★★ £1500

ProAc Studio 140
★★★★★ £1400

Once, twice, three times an Award winner, and we love this Primare and ProAc combo

Primare/ProAc

★★★★★ £4400

IN HORSE RACING terms this system is known as a 'sure thing'. Take an Award-winning Primare CD player, add the Award-winning Primare integrated stereo amp, and complete the set-up with a pair of Award-winning stereo speakers. It's a dead cert, surely?

Well, as any gambler knows 'sure things' don't always win, and it wouldn't be the first time, in a WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION system test that five-star individuals have fumbled their way to a four-star verdict overall.

The love affairs starts here

However, on this occasion, the favourite wins by a neck, mane, hoof, tail, and whatever other horse parts you care to name. Up and running, this trio rocks.

Presentation is, how do you say, BIG! The powerful amp combines with the gutsy CD player to feed the formidable floorstanders just what they need to blow the cobwebs out of any dingy listening room. Introduce the queen of hi-fi test discs, Ms Kate Bush, and you get a wonderfully airy soundstage. Choose *Sunset*, and the '140s delve impressively deep to deliver the underpinning bass with authority, definition and weight.

Even better, as the tune switches tempo, this muscular system instantly responds, rattling along with unbridled enthusiasm. Of course, you can't discuss Kate Bush without talking vocals, and here the Primare/ProAc selection continues to make you grin.

> "The ProAc speakers dig impressively deep, giving the bass solid authority"

The '140s also offer a good, solid, midrange, but not at the expense of detail. The result is tremendously realistic vocals – if we didn't know Kate was at home writing songs about washing machines, we would soon believe she was living inside one of these ProAc speakers.

Other kit on test, however, has received a glowing report only for another musical test to trip it up. A lack of aggression for rock, or perhaps a deficiency of finesse for more subtle tunes, can result in stars disappearing – but that is categorically not the case here. From Underworld's dance, to Eminem's hip-hop, to Holst's classical, this well-balanced system doesn't disappoint at all.

Solid build is out of this world

Sure, it doesn't offer quite the detail of the Densen system or quite the drive of the Naim kit, but – hey! – those systems cost thousands of pounds more than this one.

So, we're chuffed with the sound, and we're equally happy with build. The handsome Swedish electronics feel like they've been chiselled from a single meteorite, while the ProAc towers offer super-solid, if not the most visually enticing, cabinets. Will you love this system? Sure thing, we know you will.

FOR
Grand scale performance; impressive authority; class-leading detail; even tonal balance

AGAINST
Strapping electronics and big towers need plenty of space to breathe their magic

VERDICT
We know it's not cheap, but this system delivers everything you ask of it – a perfectly matched trio

TECH SPECS

CD31
CD PLAYER
TYPE Integrated
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS Phono, XLR
DIGITAL OUTPUTS Coaxial, optical
DIGITAL INPUTS None
HDCD No
CD TEXT No
MEMORY No
DISPLAY OFF Yes
FINISHES 2

I30
AMPLIFIER
TYPE Integrated
LINE LEVEL INPUTS 6
PHONO STAGE No
TAPE LOOPS None
BALANCED PREAMP OUTPUT Yes
SPEAKERS Single pair
TONE CONTROL No
HEADPHONES No
REMOTE CONTROL Yes
FINISHES 2

STUDIO 140
SPEAKERS
TYPE Two-and-a-half-way floorstander
DRIVERS Two x 12cm bass/midrange, 25mm soft dome tweeter
IMPEDANCE 4 ohms
MAX POWER-HANDLING 250w
BIWIREABLE Yes
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 32Hz-25kHz (±3)
SENSITIVITY 87dB
FINISHES 4
SIZE 98 x 20 x 30cm
WEIGHT 19kg

ONE-MAKE HI-FI SYSTEMS

Densen Beat B-400XS ★★★★★ £2600

Densen Beat B-200 (inc remote) ★★★★★ £1350

Densen Beat B-310 ★★★★★ £1100

Art Stiletto 6 ★★★★½ £1950

Danish electronics meet Scottish speakers for a special dish from the Northern climes

Densen/Art

★★★★★ £7000

IF THE TOTAL price of the Primare/ProAc system gets your bank manager's pulse racing, our final two systems have the effect of intravenously introducing a couple of litres of espresso shots.

Danish hi-fi specialist Densen has put together a CD player, preamp and power amp trio, completed by the addition of a pair of Art Stiletto loudspeakers. The Scots speaker manufacturer says the Stiletto is its 'baby range' though the '6s reach up almost a metre, weighing in at 14kg each.

Flexible about positioning

Fortunately, these floorstanders work best fairly close to the rear wall, making the '6s pretty lounge-friendly products. Their minimalist looks should appeal to those looking for clean-edged unobtrusiveness and, if you like them, you'll love the Densen trio.

FOR

Wonderfully pure and detailed delivery; pace; rock-solid bass definition; happy with all musical styles; minimalist looks; speakers happy close to wall

AGAINST

Doesn't have the all-out bass weight of the Naim and Dynaudio set-up

VERDICT

It's so clear and dynamic it should be bottled and sold in health shops

Available in black, as here, or in albino silver, the electronics offer sleek-as-otter designs, with little in the way of fascia controls to even hint at their respective uses. Only the jutting peninsula that is the preamp's volume control gives its game away. And if you like clean edges, you could slice bacon on these sharp corners – we almost lost a couple of fingers when shifting the kit. A very neat remote completes the package, though you do have to pay £150 extra for it.

> "Densen's jet-black hi-fi kit is as sleek as an otter, having minimal controls"

In operation, as is curiously often the case with hi-fi, this system sounds much as it looks. Presentation is beautifully clean and clear, like the sonic equivalent of a shot of premium vodka. Kate Bush's *Aerial* sounds sweetly spectacular. This thorough system expertly extracts masses of detail from her meticulously produced set, and tracks such as *Mrs Bartolozzi* hang in the air with an almost ethereal quality.

This song also demonstrates, arguably, this system's most surprising quality. Like we said, the Stiletto 6s work well placed just under a metre from the rear wall, and though the two-ways don't offer the biggest cabinets or the largest drivers in hi-fi world, they deliver a grand performance.

Rock hard in the low frequencies

The Art speakers won't offer quite the same scale or reach of the Dynaudios. However, they are capable of ice-hard bass, with excellent definition and power.

This package performs best after a weekend's worth of warming-up. Even from the off, though, you'll appreciate its addictive dynamics, and detailed delivery. And its all-embracing musical approach – from Kate's vocal treats, to Led Zep's brutal muscle, to Holst's trip through the stars – makes this combination a joy. Expensive? Yes. Essential? Yes, that too.

TECH SPECS

BEAT B-400XS CD PLAYER
TYPE Integrated
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS 2 x phono
DIGITAL OUTPUTS Coaxial, optical
DIGITAL INPUTS Coaxial, optical
HDCD Yes
CD TEXT Yes
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF Yes
FINISHES 2

BEAT B-200 PREAMP
TYPE Line level
TAPE LOOPS
OUTPUTS
BALANCED OUTPUTS
HEADPHONES
TONE CONTROL
REMOTE CONTROL £150
PHONO STAGE
FINISHES 2

BEAT B-310 POWER AMP
TYPE Stereo
POWER 70 watts per channel
BRIDGEABLE No
PHONO INPUT No
BALANCED INPUT No
FINISH 2

STILETTO 6 SPEAKERS
TYPE Two-way bass-reflex floorstander
DRIVERS 18cm paper bass/midrange, 25mm fabric dome tweeter
IMPEDANCE 4 ohms
MAX POWER-HANDLING n/a
BIWIREABLE Yes
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 34Hz-20kHz (±3)
SENSITIVITY 89dB
FINISHES 2
SIZE 96 x 22 x 20cm
WEIGHT 12kg

No contest.

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ONE-MAKE HI-FI SYSTEMS

Naim CDX2 ★★★★★ £2800

Naim NAC202/NAPSC ★★★★★ £1700

Naim NAP200 ★★★★★ £1455

Dynaudio Focus 220 ★★★★½ £1850

It's great to hear Naim's sublime CD player, only tested last month, in a worthy system

Naim/Dynaudio

★★★★½ £7805

PRESSING PLAY ON your first-ever Naim kit must feel like slipping into the robes of your favourite religious cult – it's not until you wrap yourself in the Naim sound that you begin to appreciate why this great British brand possesses such a committed following. Naim kit rocks: regardless of the price level, this company's kit just loves to power out tunes.

Reassuring black boxes

Our system comprises a foursome of Naim electronics – CD player, preamp, power supply, and power amp – plus a pair of Dynaudio Focus 220 floorstanding speakers. The boxes have Naim's favoured black finish, with green lighting. In isolation, this design can look dated, but stack this kit up, and you end up with a splendidly potent-looking hi-fi system – while the solid construction suggests this system might outlive, if not you, then certainly your pets.

Given the presence of all this hi-fi testosterone, the choice of a partnering pair of chunky Dynaudio towers seems entirely appropriate.

After a thorough warm-up (Naim kit loves a long run-in), the Dynaudios continue to make sense. The NAP200 rates (for this level of hi-fi) at a surprisingly low 70 watts per channel – however, it has no problems driving Dynaudio's Esotec+ design drivers, resulting in a large-room-filling (or small-room swamping) sound.

> "The system's bass has the power of an All Black maul driving over the line"

To hear this system at its best, drop Led Zeppelin's *Immigrant Song* into the CDX2's tray, fit the puck, crank the volume and enjoy! The bass drives along with the power of a New Zealand All Blacks' maul driving over the opposition's try line: drums crack out with the snap of a lion tamer's whip, while Robert Plant's vocals prod your attention with the insistence of a guilty thought. Presentation is wonderfully organised, too, making it possible to identify each band member's instrument if you try.

Switch, however, to Bjork's less forceful *Vespertine* set, and the Naim/Dynaudio system shows a couple of frailties. Up against the Densen/Art combo, it falls short on detail levels – don't get us wrong, there's masses of information, but the occasional nuance is hidden.

Led Zep in your lounge

Swap Bjork for Holst, and this system also runs behind its Danish/Scots rival on dynamics. Replacing the Dynaudios with ProAc's Studio 140s sorts the problem, but you do forgo some of the Focus 220's extended bass.

This system isn't perfect for all. Some will demand more detail and dynamics, which is why it loses a star – but if you enjoy trying to replicate Led Zep live at Knebworth circa 1979, this is the kit.

FOR

Rocks and rolls with style; big, bold sound; pace; good brands; very solid build

AGAINST

Not quite the subtlety or dynamics of the Densen/Art system

VERDICT

Loads of money, but loads of fun, this system delivers a rocking performance that's not for the feint-hearted

TECH SPECS

CDX2
CD PLAYER
TYPE Integrated
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS Phono
DIGITAL OUTPUTS None
HDCD Yes
CD TEXT No
MEMORY Yes
DISPLAY OFF Yes
FINISH Black

NAC202/NAPSC
PREAMP/PSU
TYPE Line level
TAPE LOOPS 3
OUTPUTS 1
BALANCED OUTPUTS No
HEADPHONES No
TONE CONTROL No
REMOTE CONTROL Yes
PHONO STAGE No
FINISH Black

NAP202
POWER AMP
TYPE Stereo
POWER 70 watts per channel
BRIDGEABLE No
PHONO INPUT No
BALANCED INPUT No
FINISH Black

FOCUS 220
SPEAKERS
TYPE Two-and-a-half-way floorstander
DRIVERS Two x 12cm bass/midrange, 25mm soft dome tweeter
IMPEDANCE 4 ohms
MAX POWER-HANDLING 250w
BIWIREABLE Yes
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 32Hz-25kHz (±3)
SENSITIVITY 87dB
FINISHES 4
SIZE 98x20x30cm
WEIGHT 19kg

Meridian G-Series installation.
Photo courtesy of AMX UK.

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BRIGHTON 111 LONDON ROAD, BN1 4JG	01273 679159
CARLISLE 11 WEST TOWER ST, CA3 8QT	01228 510610
CHELTENHAM 22 REGENT ARCADE, GL50 1JZ	01242 222525
CHESTER 15 BRIDGE STREET ROW, CH1 1NW	01244 351122
CHICHESTER 53 EAST ST, PO19 1JG	01243 775540
COLCHESTER 58 HIGH ST, CO1 1DH	01206 548333
CROYDON UNIT 32, CENTRALE SHOPPING CENTRE, CR0 1YA	020 8667 1551
DORCHESTER 44 TRINITY ST, DT1 1TT	01305 267757
DUNDEE 8 WHITEHALL ST, DD1 4AF	01382 224488
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GLOUCESTER 168-170 SOUTHGATE ST, GL1 2EX	01452 312198
GUILDFORD 19 TUNSGATE, GU1 3QS	01483 300606
HANLEY 74-78 PICCADILLY, ST1 1EF	01782 214069
HARROGATE 19-21 COMMERCIAL ST, HG1 1UB	01423 569249
HAVERFORDWEST 21 QUAY ST, SA61 1BD	01437 760101
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HEREFORD 32 EIGN GATE, HR4 0AB	01432 268922
HITCHIN 35 HERMITAGE ROAD, SG5 1BZ	01462 434537
HORSHAM 4 PIRIES PLACE, RH12 1EH	01403 249222
HOUNSLOW 45 HIGH ST, TW3 1RH	020 8577 7722
INVERNESS 112 ACADEMY ST, IV1 1LX	01463 716646
KINGSTON UPON THAMES 25a FIFE ROAD, KT1 1SB	020 8541 1188
LEICESTER 24 MARKET ST, LE1 6DP	01162 540600
LIMERICK 1-2 SHANNON ST, IRELAND	061 414 726
LINCOLN 155 HIGH ST, LN5 7AA	01522 528577
LIVINGSTON 9 ALMONDVALE SOUTH, EH54 6NB	01506 442622
LLANELLI BUSH HOUSE, 10 THOMAS ST, SA15 3JA	01554 777086
MILTON KEYNES 65 MIDSUMMER PLACE, MK9 3GB	08456 340370
NEWPORT 1 CAMBRIAN ROAD, NP20 4AE	01633 212321
NEWTON ABBOT 62 QUEEN ST, TQ12 2EW	01626 366266
PAIGNTON 8 TORQUAY ROAD, TQ3 3AB	01803 558429
PAISLEY 32 HIGH ST, PA1 2BZ	0141 887 7025
PERTH 13 CHARLOTTE ST, PH1 5LZ	01738 566566
PINNER 30 BRIDGE ST, HA5 3JF	020 8866 2474
PLYMOUTH 56 CORNWALL ST, PL1 1LR	01752 250571
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STIRLING 35 KING ST, FK8 1DN	01786 448888
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TEST RESULT This is a test our reviewers fight over, just because there's so much pleasure to be had from hearing a quality **hi-fi system**

BEST SYSTEM UNDER £1000

THE SUB-£1000 contest was a straight shoot-out between reigning budget king, Cambridge, and once-upon-a-time supremo Marantz. Marantz's latest electronics offer outstanding value, and the Mordaunt-Short speakers combine to create a micro-killing separates system. If you can manage the extra cash, the Cambridge/Epos team offers an extra dose of 'hi-fi'. From detail, to pace, to punch – this trio punches way above its price point. It's awesome! And, like all these systems, budget a decent amount for the right accessories, which will add the final sparkle to your system.

NOW ADD THESE!

EQUIPMENT RACK
TARGET S230 ★★★★★ £229
Isolates your kit from unwanted vibrations

INTERCONNECT
CHORD COBRA 3 ★★★★★ £60
A very musical delivery for the money

SPEAKER CABLE
CHORD CAR. SILVER ★★★★★ £5.50/m
A smoother sound from the Carnival Silver

SPEAKER STANDS
EPOS ST35 ★★★★½ £99
Complement its M5s perfectly for £100

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

Cambridge/Epos
★★★★★
£850

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

Roksan/KEF
★★★★★
£1400

BEST SYSTEM £1000-£2000

THIS CATEGORY PRODUCED the most surprising result. With the help of fierce pricing, plus a pair of Award-winning floorstanders, Roksan turned a four-star CD player and four-star integrated amp into a five-star system. It's a great example of perfect system-matching, and clever marketing. For £1400, the amount of fun you get makes our winner a 'must-demo' system. However, let's not forget the refined, agile performance of the Cyrus/Spendor kit – it's a classy system, ideal for medium-to-small rooms. The Creek/Epos combo was slightly over-priced, we felt. Creek should take a leaf out of Roksan's book.

NOW ADD THESE!

EQUIPMENT RACK
ATACAMA EQUINOX ★★★★★ £300
Multiple-Award-winning modular supports

STEREO INTERCONNECT
ECOSSE NU DIVA ★★★★★ £125
Deliviers clarity and sonic balance

SPEAKER CABLE
QED SILVER ANNIV. XT ★★★★★ £5.50
The QED's crisper sound suits this system

MAINS CABLES
MERLIN TARANTULA ★★★★★ 2x£50
Great-value leads – well worth the outlay

BEST SYSTEM OVER £2000

THE HIGH-END category always produces much 'enjoyable discussion' among the review team. You know the chat: "is a seven-grand system 14 times better than a £500 system?", and all that. There was no doubt, however, when it came to deciding the winner: though the Densen/Art system offers a sublime, astonishingly detailed listening experience, and the Naim system sets the sonic heather alight, the Primare/ProAc set-up is just so darn well-balanced it's impossible to shove off the winner's rostrum. Dynamics, finesse, scale – this £4400 wonder leaves you wanting for nothing.

NOW ADD THESE!

EQUIPMENT RACK
CLEARLIGHT ASPEKT ★★★★★ £550
Gorgeous looks, and as solid as a rock

STEREO INTERCONNECT
ATLAS VOYAGER ALL-CU ★★★★½ £170
All-copper cable is clear as a proverbial bell

SPEAKER CABLE
ATLAS HYPER 3.0 ★★★★★ £20/m
Expensive cable, but worth all the hype

MAINS CABLE
CLEARER COPPER-LINE ★★★★★ 2x£95
Cleans your mains to the ultimate degree

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

Primare/ProAc
★★★★★
£4400

DAB radio's made it easier than ever to hear your favourite stations – and many more new ones. Here are **16 of the latest digital portables** – which radios deserve to be taken home?

Group Test

DAB RADIOS **£40-£150**

Digital radios: the good, bad and ugly

Dual ddab-01

★★☆☆☆ £40

VERDICT

This Asda-special isn't so special at all. Though it's cheap and its appearance flatters to deceive, we'd look elsewhere

THE CHEAPEST DAB radio in this round up is this Dual offering, available from Asda supermarkets up and down the land. We've had some good examples of 'supermarket specials' in recent history... sadly, this isn't one of them.

As is often the case, the Dual looks more than a little like the class-leading Pure Evoke-1 XT – highest form of flattery and all that... It's a mains-powered only DAB/FM affair, complete with alarm and sleep functions and some eight preset settings.

If only it sounded more like the Evoke, rather than a lightweight performer, with implausibly thin sound that becomes harsh at high volumes. Switch to FM mode and the ddab-01 is a much more enjoyable listen, but it still sounds lean. There's also a fair bit of general interference and instability as we peruse our favourite stations.

Prices may be plummetting, but this Dual makes it clear that it still costs more than £40 to buy a decent-quality digital radio.

Acoustic Solutions Portal 1 DAB

★★★★☆ £50

TAKE THIS RADIO out of its box and we can't help but shiftily feel we're handling someone's stolen car stereo – just look at that handle and top-mounted display! But no, it's a DAB-only, mains or battery-powered radio.

The radio either sits on its base, in which case you can't see the display from head-on, or rests on its handle, which means the side-sited speaker is facing down and the radio is slightly wobbly. Not ideal, but the whole package is smart-looking and pleasingly minimalist in its design.

Such simplicity extends to its features, too – for example, there are no presets, though this isn't a huge problem with DAB's instant station-selection.

The Portal 1's performance is initially tinny and reminiscent of analogue radios, but given time the balance levels out, making for an even-handed and listenable sound. And hey, it's £50! Low on frills, and no FM , but it looks the part and sounds good for the cash.

VERDICT
This is what we call great budget value – simple, smart and effective

iTech iDAB Cube

★★☆☆☆ £69

NO SURPRISES FOR guessing the shape of this radio – yes, it's a cube, with the speaker on the top and a port on the rear. Taking the more-is-more approach to design, the Cube is crammed with buttons and, to be frank, looks far from welcoming compared to many of the simpler radios around. It also feels and looks on the cheap side – but that's fair enough at this price .

Among all the iTech's minute controls are six preset buttons, a sleep and alarm function, plus 'easy tune' and DAB/FM switching buttons. It's mains-power only here, so not as truly portable as some of those radios that can also run off batteries.

Sonically it's rather disappointing, lacking the cleanliness and clarity we'd expect from DAB in general. Speech radio sounds muffled, and upbeat music stations come across as harsh and tiring. There's admirable bass extension on show, but overall it just doesn't sound good enough compared to the competition.

VERDICT
Not big fans of this one – a bit of a fiddle to use and little in the way of pay-off

Intempo KT-01

★★★★★ £70

THERE ARE A number of reasons you may recognise this portable radio from Intempo. Firstly it received a five star verdict the first time we saw it in June 2005. Secondly, there's a rather natty designer version of this very portable elsewhere in this test. But this original 'standard' edition, setting you back some £55 less, is the real object of desire for us.

Yes, our review model is pink, but it's available in grey or cream finishes as well. Build quality is admirable, with durable-feeling buttons, simple volume knob and a clear LCD display. There's an alarm, sleep control and both DAB and FM receivers.

The KT-01 sounds great as well. Listen in to BBC 5 Live and spoken word has authority, warmth and detail. Flick over to 6 Music and tunes are given a detailed top end as well as plenty of bass depth and weight. At just £70, this Intempo is a DAB bargain.

VERDICT
Superb sound performance-per-pound from this Intempo; the KT-01 looks, functions and sounds just how we like our digital radios (though maybe not in pink)

music technology style

ARCAM solo

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Genus Geo 1

★★★☆☆ £70

GENUS ISN'T A brand we see too often in our pages, and as we were getting the Geo 1 out of its packaging we were wondering why not. This is a stylish, individual looking radio – taking its style tips from Toblerone it seems – which is immediately endearing to use.

The Geo 1 would sit neatly on a bedside table – aided in no small measure by its alarm and sleep function, plus a pleasingly big and bold display. It's mains-powered only, though – so it's more of a permanent bedroom fixture than hotel-room companion.

If you like being woken up by the Today programme on Radio 4 or the less-dulcet tones of TalkSport, the Genus will suit you fine, as speech radio isn't too demanding on its rather narrow-sounding delivery. But this lightweight performance becomes more apparent with music, which deserve more bottom-end than the Geo 1 is capable of providing.

VERDICT
Style over substance here: the Geo 1 looks great and is a joy to use, but sound quality is merely average

Bush TR2004

★★★★☆ £80

WE WERE BIG fans of the TR2003 that preceded this model, so we had high hopes for this Bush DAB. The TR2004 retains a similar retro styling, with two speakers in the front of the unit and all the controls perched on top alongside the display – which isn't ideal, unless you're very tall, or it's sat on a low table or shelf. But hey, it's versatile, and certainly portable – it can be powered by six batteries or the mains.

Sonically it has much to endear it at this price. Dialogue is given due intimacy and detail, while music is delivered with an even hand and is perfectly enjoyable. It's only a few drawbacks with the build that leave us with reservations; the buttons are on the clunky side, and aren't clearly labelled either, making the radio hard to use in an upright position, while our sample also suffered from a rattle when we applied bass boost.

But all told, this is a good product from Bush that offers great sound for not much money at all.

VERDICT
Not without flaws, but the impressive sound marks it out for some special attention at this price-point

Genus Vero 1

★★★☆☆ £85

WOULD YOU HAVE guessed the two Genus units in this test were from the same manufacturer? No, us neither. While the Geo 1 was compact, clutter-free and endearing to the eye, the far-bigger Vero 1 seems cumbersome – but functionally, it is again fairly efficient.

Powered by either the mains or batteries, the Vero 1 boasts FM and DAB reception and stereo speakers. The large rotary control buttons are easy to get your fingers round, but they're painfully slow no matter how fast you turn them, making scanning for stations a chore.

There's an openness and added weight to the sound when compared to the Geo 1, but the trade-off is a loss of some authority and detail, despite the G-Pro enhancement technology Genus is pushing. In its favour, DAB and FM receptions are stable and interference-free. But again, despite several strengths, the Vero 1 is merely average in this class.

VERDICT
Lack of sonic ability means the Vero 1 must languish in mid-table mediocrity

L-ite

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Intempo RS-01

★★★☆☆ £89

THE STYLING OF this Intempo won't be for everyone. It's another cube, which is fine by us, but the turquoise and white colour scheme doesn't quite float our boats.

Inside there's plenty more to get our attention, with DAB, FM and a CD player all on the feature-list, along with speakers on either side offering stereo sound. The flimsy wire FM aerial makes for a bit of extra fuss with placement, while the volume control is slightly confusing and pedestrian to use. On the other hand, the remote control is a handy feature.

The sonic performance is clear, clean and reasonably detailed for the money, but at loud volume this can translate into a rather cold, hard sound. There's a real lack of bottom-end grunt, too. And this isn't just required in terms of hearing some genuine deep bass, but for the good of the overall sound balance.

Decidedly average effort from Intempo then, by the standards of its rivals and its own earlier products, too.

VERDICT
Sonic ability won't set it apart, while the design and controls didn't exactly have us salivating either

Panasonic RF-D1

★★★★☆ £99

THIS ONE'S A grower. The more we used it and listened to it, the more we liked it. To be fair, we had some idea we were going to be fans; the RF-D1 was on the end of a four-star review back in June. But we were pleased with how well it stands up to strong new competition.

Typical Panasonic usability helps its appeal. Controls are simple and clear, though the display could be better, while the rotary control knobs are easy to use. There's both FM and DAB capability, which you can negotiate with the aid of 10 presets.

The quality of the sound grew on us, too. At first a little thin, some bass weight slowly appeared after a while warming up, helping to balance out proceedings. The FM performance was particularly pleasing, too, with crystal-clear reception and good detail.

Despite the passing of time and a host of new kids on the block, the Panasonic RF-D1 holds on to its well-deserved four-star verdict.

VERDICT
Detailed, clear sound, especially impressive when listening to FM broadcasts – a good, solid performer

Pure Evoke-1 XT

★★★★★ £100

IT MAY LINGER like something altogether more unsavoury, but this Pure continues to come out smelling of both roses and success. An Award winner in 2004 and 2005, the Pure Evoke-1 XT is still a great buy.

Understated style and simplicity of use are paramount here, as is crystal-clear reception and detailed, well-balanced sound delivery. Bass extension from the one speaker is also impressive for such a small portable, giving real grunt and weight. There are six presets, a headphone socket and a line out for the chance to add an extra speaker or connect it to your existing hi-fi.

Another good feature is the Dynamic Range Control option, which lets you adjust the sound in accordance with the varying compression on different stations.

The Evoke-1 XT is a superb-sounding mains-powered portable, and an ideal, affordable introduction to DAB. No wonder it's the UK's bestselling digital radio.

VERDICT
The original benchmark for DAB portables remains as competitive as ever, still boasting better sound quality than any other at this price

Freeplay Devo

★★★★☆ £100

THIS IS A DAB portable radio like no other here. Why? Well, it can be driven by the power of perspiration. If you're not near a mains socket and the in-built rechargeable battery is waning, then fear not, a minute of winding the thing up – yes, really – will give you an hour's of FM listening or some five minutes on DAB.

The Devo is truly portable – as the rugged, solid build testifies. Control buttons are neat, laid out intuitively and easy to use. Freeplay opts for a retro FM dial design that's pleasant enough, but the absence of any information on the display when in FM mode is disappointing – it's amazing how quickly the display-driven world of digital radio becomes the accepted norm.

The Freeplay offers stable FM and DAB reception, with speech radio handled assuredly, and with good insight. Music performance isn't quite as strong, a lack of real bass depth being the main problem, but treble and midrange detail is good. Give it a whirl!

VERDICT
This is a unique solution, and if it's true portability and DAB radio freedom you're after, the wind-up Devo is a great solution

Sharp FV-DB2E

★★★★☆ £100

HERE'S A RADIO for those who find their phone ringing off the hook as soon as their favourite programme starts. Sharp's new FV-DB2E is one of several clever contenders here that allow you to pause, rewind and fast-forward live radio. The time-shift feature works well too, though on most stations you'll only get some 20 minutes of programming saved.

The Sharp is a little chunky, but as a result feels solid and durable. Controls are firm (but fair) and the main joystick tuning/volume control is neat and responsive. There are five presets, clock and timer features and a big, easy-to-read screen. It's simply a well-built, well-designed DAB/FM unit.

In FM mode dialogue is detailed and open, while music is dynamic. Switch to DAB and again the overall sound quality is good, and only a slight lack of clarity and cleanliness see it marked down. All told, Sharp's latest radio more than holds its own at this price.

VERDICT
Solid, sturdy build, clever features and decent, detailed sound make this an impressive performer for £100

Roberts Gemini RD-27

★★★★☆ £120

ROBERTS' REP IN THE world of radios is hard to argue with – it's got three Royal warrants, don't you know – and no matter how many different models it churns out, they always seem to do the job.

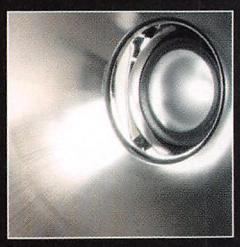
The RD-27 jumps on the rewind radio bandwagon, offering the chance to pause the live radio you're tuned into for up to 20 minutes, so you'll never miss a thing.

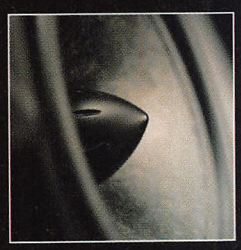
There are five preset buttons for both FM and DAB radio, plus treble and bass controls – all laid-out sensibly along with a clear display on top. Other features include a phono output and the ability to power the radio by batteries or from the mains.

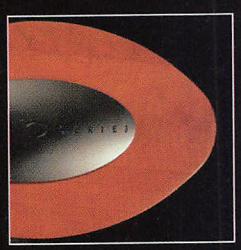
The rewind radio is a great feature but somehow the sound doesn't quite have the vitality we've come to expect from a Roberts, nor does it quite have the same air of quality about it. Nonetheless, this is still a good performer that provides a perfectly enjoyable listen.

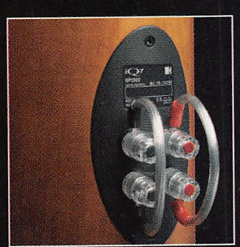
VERDICT
Good, but not a Roberts great – we expect a little more quality sonically and in terms of build for this money

KEF®









HI-FI CHOICE
GOLD AWARD
AWARDS 2005

EISA AWARDS
LOUDSPEAKER 2005-2006
KEF iQ3

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO SPEAKERS
KEF iQ5

★★★★★

"They produce stunning scale and authority"

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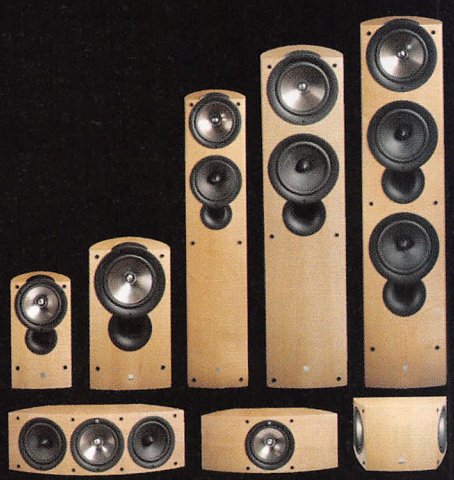

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Intempo KTM-02

★★★★☆ £129

DID YOU KNOW John Lewis sells more DAB radios per store than any other retailer in the world? You do now. That'll be why they can afford fancy exclusives like this Matthew Williamson-designed KTM-02.

Hot on the heels of the KTM-01 (in Williamson's pink 'n' peacock finish), this new design is again almost identical internally to Intempo's £70 KT-01.

There's DAB and FM support here, four preset buttons – that are a tad on the clunky side – plus sleep and alarm functions. The two speakers mean stereo sound's available where broadcast, while there's the option of batteries or the mains for your power.

Sonically it impresses: treble is clear, though veering towards bright at times (the bass boost works wonders at levelling out the balance). FM reception is solid, too.

The KTM-02's distinctive design is costing you, but a percentage goes to the Make A Wish charity, so this strong-performing, stylish radio's worth investigating.

VERDICT
Break from the norm with a DAB radio that looks like no other and sounds pretty funky, too

Pure Evoke-2 XT

★★★★★ £150

THE EVOKE-2 XT is not only the stereo incarnation of the Evoke-1 XT, but also our current Product of the Year in the radio world. We seized the chance to give it another test and attempt to topple it from its perch, but we're just as happy to report it's still easily the best in class.

Looks are simple and pragmatic. Buttons are where they should be, while the display is a decent size and easy to read even when you're bleary-eyed at breakfast. Mains or battery operated (via standard batteries or an optional rechargeable ChargePak), the '2 XT also offers a clock, alarm, headphone socket and line out.

Sonically, the Evoke-2 XT is noticeably broader and more authoritative than its smaller sibling – thanks in no small part to the stereo speakers – and offers bags of insight and bass without ever losing its balance.

This Pure deserves to continue to fly off the shelves, delivering as it does everything you could ask for from a simple FM/DAB radio.

VERDICT
Still the top of the pile; fancy features may be absent, but for sheer style and sonic ability it's well ahead

Roberts RD50CFM

★★★★★ £150

THIS ROBERTS RADIO just oozed class as soon as we got our grubby, DAB-hungry mitts on it. Available in five different colours – green, burgundy, pastel blue, pink and red (pictured) – the leather casing feels and looks suitably regal, in line with Roberts' royal approval.

It doesn't just have the classic look down to a tee – it exudes class and quality sonically, too. Dialogue has a rich, warm sound, and happily it conveys as much detail and emotion with 1Xtra's thundering drum 'n' bass beats as it does delivering *The Archers* on Radio 4.

Also on display here are Roberts' Pause Plus and Rewind features, allowing you to pause live radio or listen instantly again if you miss a crucial moment. Both are easy to use, and work without complaint.

The RD50's design, sound and style all shine, and if you're a Classic FM fan there's even a direct preset button on these special editions. No arguments here.

VERDICT
Sounds as good as it looks – an instant classic, fit for a Queen

Feast your mince pies on these wee crackers

Okay, enough Xmas puns – now tuck into this fine selection of **stocking fillers** that'll help you weed out the rotten satsumas from the chocolate oranges

1

1 HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER
PRO-JECT HEAD BOX MKII
★★★★★
£ 75

VERDICT

'Turn that flippin' music down now!' Banish those big-volume blues with a decent pair of 'phones and the Pro-ject Head Box MkII. If your amplifier doesn't have a headphone out, plug the Pro-Ject into a spare tape loop, and you're away. Even if you do have a 'phone out, the Head Box MkII sounds better, at least on sub-£500 kit.

2 OFF-BOARD VIDEO INPUT
PURELINK DC-DA1
★★★★★
£ 225

VERDICT

Owners of older plasmas could be delighted by this unassuming box of tricks: it's designed to allow any set that lacks an HDMI or DVI input to accept High Definition video. Performance is good, if a little soft – but it breathes new life into otherwise redundant tech. And that's good!

3 REMOTE STAND
EZC REMOTESTAND
★★★☆☆
£ 5

VERDICT

Tired of losing remotes? Try this: you use the supplied Velcro to attach your handset to a light metal stand. It makes remote controls easier to find, but rather unwieldy to use.

4 FREEVIEW
FERGUSON FD1 PRISM
★★★★☆
£ 50

VERDICT

A Freeview digital TV tuner that looks cool? OK, it has no Scart connection, but it does include an S-Video-to-Scart cable. The picture is pretty good, if not the best we've ever seen.

5 PROTECTIVE CD/DVD DISC COVERS
D_SKIN
★★★☆☆
£ 7.50/5

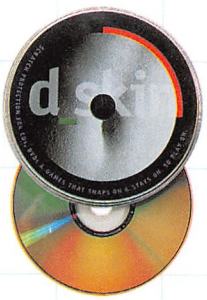
VERDICT

Something for the weekend, sir? Slip a D_Skin on a CD or DVD, and you need never take it off – your beloved disc is protected for life. Or you could try just putting it back in its case...

6 MP3 YOUR HI-FI
BELKIN TUNESTAGE
★★★★★
£ 100

VERDICT

Belkin turns your iPod (fourth-gen' and older only, so far) into a remote control for your hi-fi. Plug the neat Bluetooth receiver into your hi-fi, and the compact 'sender' into the top of your iPod – then keep the iPod in your hand to access and play your tracks. It's sheer genius...



5

6

2

7 15in LCD TV
MOGEN
ML-1508TN
★★★★★
£ 170

VERDICT
OK, so sound is thin and weedy, while colours are a bit washed-out, but y'know what? For the money, this 15in flat TV is terrific. You'll need a pretty big stocking to put it in, but it's worth the hassle. This is much better than it needs to be for the price.

8 HDMI SWITCHER
PURE LINK
HDMI SWITCH
★★★★☆
£ 239

VERDICT
With Xbox 360s and PS3s on the way, plus High-Def digiboxes round the corner, we're all going to need more than one HDMI input on our TVs soon. Pure Link has the answer: two HDMIs go in, one comes out. A star is lost for a minor loss in quality.

9 SCART ROUTER
HOLDAN
SCART ROUTER
★★☆☆☆
£ 89

VERDICT
Capable of receiving six Scart inputs and relaying them to a single TV, this seems a decent solution. Sadly, notable signal degradation undermines the Holdan's appeal. Wanna add noise and instability to your picture? No? Look elsewhere...

10 VIDEO CABLE
BELKIN
RAZORVISION
★★☆☆☆
£ 199

VERDICT
An 'active' digital video cable, the RazorVision (DVI-to-DVI or HDMI-to-HDMI, or one of each), processes the incoming digital pictures from your sources and tries to enhance them. Sadly, it does more harm than good, and it's not cheap.

11 CLEAN-UP DISC
ISOTEK HI-FI
REJUVENATOR
★★★★★
£ 15

VERDICT
Isotek is turning into an obsessive-compulsive: it likes things to be clean... very clean. The 'Full System Enhancer and Rejuvenation Disc' works, too. It demagnetises – cleans – your hi-fi components and cables, and the result is you get better sound.

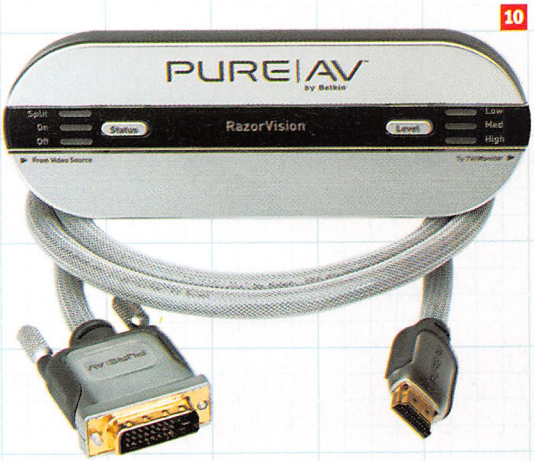
12 REMOTE BOOSTER
KEENE REMOTE
DISTRIBUTOR
★★★★★
£ 40

VERDICT
This is aimed at those of us who have their hi-fi or AV set-ups hidden away, so there's no 'line of sight' to allow remote controls to work. Cable your components to this IR receiver, put it on top of the TV, and you can control your kit once again.

12

11

8



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9

MP3 YOUR WORLD

Whether you're after a non-stop party mix or simply hearing your downloads in a whole new way, here's how to combine the convenience of your MP3 collection with the quality of your hi-fi

1 Computers ··· Hi-Fi

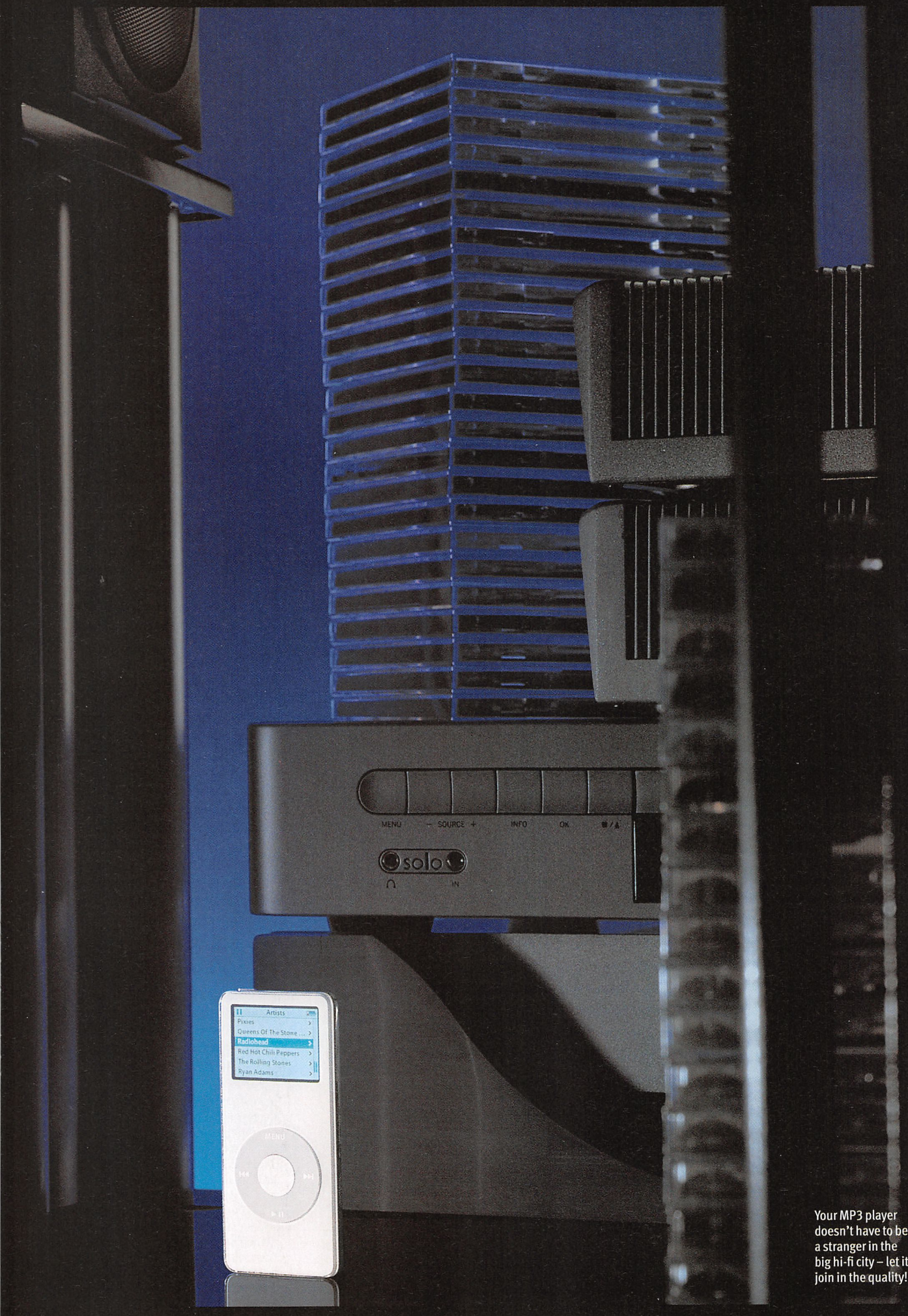
How to build the best-sounding collection of digital music and pipe it from your desktop to your hi-fi – wirelessly, of course!

2 MP3 players ··· Hi-Fi

Take your music anywhere with a portable player – and when you get there, here's how to share its sounds via any hi-fi or home cinema system

3 Music servers ··· Hi-Fi

From CD players with hard-disk drives to masters of multiroom music, here are alternative, high-quality ways of adding MP3 around your home



Your MP3 player doesn't have to be a stranger in the big hi-fi city – let it join in the quality!

Computer Hi-Fi

Is your MP3 collection sitting on your desktop, playing through poor PC speakers? Here's how to hear far more

IF YOU EITHER have an MP3 collection or plan to create one, chances are all your tunes will be stored on the hard disk of a PC or Mac. We'll come to how you can improve your access to that music later: first, let's clarify the basics.

There are two key methods of filling your computer with music. First, you can 'rip' your CDs onto the hard disk. This process converts CD audio into compressed digital music files – you can choose the specific quality and file type, about which more in a moment.

Second, you can legally download single tracks or entire albums from online music shops, such as Apple's iTunes MusicStore. It's vital you subscribe to a broadband internet provider to ensure swift music download.

Organize your music properly

Ripping or downloading your music is one thing: organising it is another. This is where dedicated music software, such as Apple iTunes or Microsoft's Windows Media Player, is essential. Both these programmes can be downloaded for free, but also often come bundled with new computers and MP3 portables.

Either system allows you to store music by title, genre and more, and also gives you powerful music search tools. They also let you create personalised music playlists – your very own jukebox!

Choose your file format

MP3 is, in fact, only one of the music file types available, as you can see from our table below. There are two key issues to consider. First, don't assume your computer or MP3 player will support every music format. Second, whether ripping or downloading, the key to good sound is choosing the right file type and minimal compression.

If your computer has a massive hard disk, store music in better-quality file sizes, or even in uncompressed form – this sounds like real hi-fi

Compressed music is quantified in kilobytes per second (kbps). It's as simple as this: the higher the bit-rate, the better the sonic quality – but also the larger the file. If your computer has a massive hard disk, you could store music in better-quality file sizes, or even in an entirely uncompressed form – this can sounds like real hi-fi on a good system.

However, uncompressed music files won't suit most personal MP3 players: you might not have enough space for 50 CDs, never mind 500. For example, file formats such as WAV or AIFF are completely uncompressed, and can require 650MB of space per album.

Apple's AirPort Express is an easy route to wireless music in your home

Where can I buy tunes?

Downloading music is easy, but format compatibility is important here, too. Apple's iTunes MusicStore (*www.apple.com/uk/itunes*) uses the AAC digital music format, while rival Napster (*www.napster.co.uk*) uses WMA files.

Hooking up to your hi-fi

So, now you've got a music collection set up: the next step is getting that music into your hi-fi. The simplest method is good old wire: depending on the type of soundcard installed in your computer, a 3.5mm-to-phono cable will be fine, while some high-quality soundcards even boast proper stereo analogue outputs for optimum connectivity. However, this still involves wire trailing about the place, especially if your computer is in one room and your hi-fi is in another. The alternative? Go wireless...

So what do I need?

The simplest way is to create a direct wireless connection from computer to hi-fi. Apple's £100 Airport Express (£100, left) is a main-powered receiver that plugs into the phono sockets on your hi-fi. If your computer already has a wireless network card (new ones often do), then you're off. Otherwise, add a wi-fi card, such as Apple's £60 AirPort Extreme. If you want to have several computers talking together, then you'll need a wireless router (a computer junction box), and some help setting it up.

WHAT FORMAT?

FORMATS	What is it?	Who uses it?	Performance?	Our Verdict
AAC ★★★★★	Advanced Audio Coding uses improved digital coding to deliver better sound than MP3	Chiefly, Apple: it's the key audio system used by the iPod and iTunes. Support is growing elsewhere, too	No doubt about it: AAC sounds very good, with a fuller sound than MP3. It's still not CD-quality, though	AAC is the best-available format for downloading files at standard bit rates. Use 192kbps if possible
APPLE LOSSLESS ★★★★★	Uses cunning coding to repackage CD audio into less space, but without the big drop in quality	Apple again: it's their proprietary technology, developed for top-quality iTunes and iPod sound	Excellent, but the pay-off is each file takes up tons of space. You'll need a very big hard disk...	Easily the closest sound to CD, but be mindful of how much space it consumes. A 60GB iPod is a must
ATRAC 3 ★★★☆☆	Adaptive Transform Audio Coding is a Sony format, originally developed to support MiniDisc	Sony – though it works well, few companies have chosen to adopt ATRAC 3, so its appeal is limited	It compresses your music less than MP3, and so tends to sound more open and spacious	Useful for ripping files to CD-R for replay on a Sony portable, but Sony now supports MP3, too
MP3 ★★★☆☆	MPEG-1 Layer 3 has been around for over a decade. Now synonymous with digital music	Everyone – you'll easily find MP3 audio files on the internet, and players even crop up in fridges	OK, but 192kbps is our minimum recommended bit-rate – and even then, AAC still sounds better	Still worthwhile and still amazingly accessible, but newer formats show it the way home for performance
WMA ★★★★☆	Windows Media Audio, developed by Microsoft for use with its Windows Media Player (for PC)	PC-orientated download sites, Media Center PCs and more. WMA won't play on iPods, though	More open and muscular than MP3, but not quite up to the task of taking on AAC's superior sound	Thanks to Microsoft's clout, WMA is a format destined for success. PC users, give it a good listen

NOW ADD A WI-FI NETWORK SERVER

ROKU SOUNDBRIDGE M1000 £180

★★★★★

The Roku M1000 looks stylish, and caters for all your wireless needs without any hitch.

You get a wi-fi adapter included as standard, and this helps the Roku track down an existing wireless router. There's no software to install, and it can cope with digital music files from both iTunes and Windows Media Player in various formats, including AAC and WMA.

A blue LED screen displays current track information, while the intuitive remote control allows you to trawl through individual tunes or select playlists. Sound quality is excellent: it's difficult to find fault with this wireless system.

NOW TRY THIS

Apple iMac G5 17in

★★★★½ £899

THERE'S A DEFINING difference between computing and home entertainment: you sit forward for the former, and sit back for the latter. Which places Apple's updated iMac G5 in a strange space – thanks to the addition of a dinky new remote and one little application, the iMac now blurs the lines between conventional desktop, movie machine and hi-fi.

That application, FrontRow, is effectively a smart interface for your media. In Clark Kent mode, the iMac is an ordinary computer (albeit one in a drop-dead frock). But stab the Menu button on the iPod-style remote, and your desktop slickly transforms into a multimedia Superman.

You're presented with simple, large icons depicting your music, DVDs, photos and videos, all controlled by an infrared remote that keeps it simple – volume up and down, skip back and forward, select, and menu.

FOR
Slick, all-in-one music and movie solution; beautiful design; you get a free computer thrown in

AGAINST
Good external desktop speakers are a must; 20in screen the better option; tiny remote fated to be lost

VERDICT
Now an all-in-one entertainment centre – all it needs to add is to be able to play and record TV

And it works, too. The interface is quick to respond, and the remote works over very useful distances – up to a decent 10m.

Let's hear it for the remote

While the functionality may not be ground-breaking (remember, Microsoft has been touting its Media Center PCs for several years now), it does address one of iTunes' downsides – namely, the ability to switch tracks from a distance. And if you're running your iTunes wirelessly throughout your home via Airport Express, the remote really comes into its own.

The cunningly hidden built-in stereo speakers are surprisingly good for a desktop, though were beaten hands down by running an output to Acoustic Energy's Aego system (see review p23). It won't challenge decent budget separates hi-fi, but it's more than good enough for daily listening.

Downsides? Your glee at the remote's tiny size might soon give way to rage when you lose the thing in the sofa, betraying Apple's newness to the living room. Also, while the 17in LCD screen is bright and vivid, its off-axis video performance could be improved. And talking of screens, we'd opt for the £1199 20in model – it's more watchable at long distances.

Also, off the shelf, the iMac's functionality is limited: Media Center PCs have TV tuners as standard and can work as a straight-to-hard-disk recorder. You'll need add-on hardware and software to do this with your iMac.

We still love the G5 iMac – it looks great, works extremely well, and coupled with external speakers, makes a fine second source.

TECH SPECS

HARD DISK 160GB
SCREEN/SIZE
16:10 LCD, 1440 x 900 pixels
PROCESSOR
1.9GHz PowerPC G5 with Velocity Engine
RAM
512MB, up to 2.5GB available (upgrade)
GRAPHICS
ATI Radeon X600 Pro
INPUTS
2 x FireWire, 3 x USB 2.0, 2 x USB, line audio input
OUTPUTS
S-Video, composite, VGA, optical digital, headphone out

MP3 player Hi-Fi

Sharing your portable player's sounds is easier than you think – and can cost as little as a couple of quid

RIGHT, NOW THAT you've loaded your portable device to bursting point with tunes, it's time to hook it up to your hi-fi. The process couldn't be simpler. All you need to do is connect a 3.5mm-jack-to-phono cable from your MP3 player's headphone socket to your amplifier's line inputs. A basic, couple-of-quid wire should suffice, but if you're willing to invest in a specially designed MP3-to-hi-fi cable then expect better sound. Try Supra's impressive Biline-MP (£45) or Monster's iCable (£20).

Music all around you

You can also repeat the same process with a home cinema receiver. And many models have a line-in socket on the front to save you fumbling about around the back. This means you'll also be able to enjoy your tunes in surround sound, albeit 'artificially', using the likes of Dolby ProLogic-IIx processing.

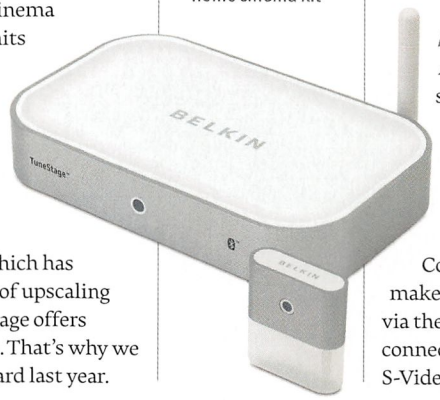
However, there's even better news. The likes of Pioneer (VSX-AX4AVi and VSX-AX2AV) and Denon (AVR-4306) both have receivers on the market with dedicated iPod sockets. This means you can dispense with the jack-to-phono cable and use the supplied cable(s) to connect your iPod straight into the receiver. You'll now be able to use the receiver's remote control to access your iPod menus, cycle through tracks and alter volume levels. All that and the receiver charges your iPod, too.

Expect these iPod-friendly products to be joined by many more in the near future, from micro systems to micro-waves (Okay, we made the last one up, but don't bet there's not one planned).

Expect this exciting new generation of iPod-friendly hi-fi and home cinema products to be joined by many more innovations next year

Plug and Play

If you want an all-in-one 'Pod-mating package, then Japanese manufacturer Denon has the Smart Life S-101 (£850) and S-301 (£1250) home cinema systems. Both of these units feature dedicated iPod connectivity, while the more expensive S-301 will also cater for other MP3 players via its USB input. Movie fans won't be disappointed, either – especially by the S-301, which has an HDMI output capable of upscaling to 720p or 1080i. The package offers superb picture and sound. That's why we gave it a best-in-class Award last year.



Belkin's TuneStage wirelessly plays your iPod's tunes via your hi-fi or home cinema kit

Your iPod in the dock

An extension of the above method involves slotting your iPod of choice into a purpose-built dock. Apple's latest Universal Dock (£25), for example, houses and charges iPods of all sizes, and allows you to control your player via the Apple Remote (£19). Music benefits, too – you'll hear a marked improvement in detail levels and a greater sense of weight and authority compared to bog-standard jack-to-RCA cable connection.

Owners of Onkyo receivers with one of the company's proprietary 'RI' inputs should consider the DS-A1 (£60). It lets them control their 'Pod using the same remote. Even if you own a different make of receiver, the dock offers great sound and vision connectivity, plus charging.

Another new, wireless option is the £100 Belkin TuneStage (see p80), which can transmit your iPod's tunes to a hi-fi system up to 10m away.

And it's not just music

As MP3 players join the world of sound *and* vision, hooking an iPod, Creative Zen Vision or even Sony PSP to your TV opens up a world of digital-photo slideshows, your own MTV-style music-video station and go-anywhere gaming.

Colour-screened iPods are able to make a composite-video connection via their headphone sockets, but use a connector dock and superior-quality S-Video becomes an option, too.

AMP YOUR iPOD

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
PIONEER VSX-AX4AVI
★★★★☆
£1000

Pioneer's latest home cinema receivers boast iPod connectivity. For example, the VSX-AX4AVi (tested on p92) has been fitted with an iPod socket around the rear and allows you to use the Pioneer's remote or on-screen display to operate your Apple. Non-Apple owners can attach their player to one of the other inputs.

HOME CINEMA IN A BOX
DENON SMARTLIFE S-301
★★★★★
£1250

Denon's system has a dedicated iPod input on its fascia, alongside a USB input for just about any other MP3 player. Attach your iPod using the supplied cable, and an imitation Apple menu flashes on to your TV screen – to be controlled from the Denon remote. There's a line-in for other players, too.

HI-FI SYSTEM
ARCAM SOLO
★★★★★
£1000

Arcam's Award-winning Solo hi-fi system makes it easy to hook up any type of portable player by having a handy line-in socket on its front fascia. A dock, cable and software upgrade are due that'll also enable you to view your iPod's tracks on the Solo's display and control the player via the Arcam remote.

ALSO CONSIDER

CREATIVE ZEN SLEEK
★★★★★£200
December 2005

Creative – the pioneer of mass-market MP3 players – still offers the most serious alternative to Apple's world domination. The 20GB Zen Sleek beats the iPod with some features, like its radio, but unfortunately is PC-only. It delivers excellent sound. There's good bass, a natural midrange and controlled treble. Timing is good, too, with tunes nipping along nicely.

Another bonus to buying Creative kit – as opposed to some of the recent iPod rivals – is the amount of accessories available. For example, the Sleek has its own dock (£27) to aid hi-fi hook-up, and Creative offers various cable and speakers options, too.

NOW TRY THIS

Apple iPod (60GB)

★★★★★ £299

NOT FOR APPLE the laurel-resting it could justifiably indulge in, laying back and watching its bank-balance bulge as an iPod is sold every 40 seconds or so. Instead, it's on to its fourth new iPod model in a year – slimmer than the original jukebox player, but with a 2.5in colour screen, support for video playback and large hard disks (the 30GB version costs £219).

As easy as ever to use

It's as usable as ever, aided by the sublimely simple yet elegant click-wheel on the iPod itself and the incomparable iTunes software (just make sure you install the accompanying latest version, or download it, as it's vital for video.)

Like its smaller nano sibling, the new iPod is available in a black finish as well as the iconic white – but, beware, just like the nano, that gloss design makes this model easier to scratch than previous 'Pods. It's nowhere near as bad as some reports would have you believe, but if you want to keep your new player looking at its best, a case is a canny buy. (Oh, and the black finish will scratch more easily, by the way.)

FOR
Looks great, sounds great and offers unrivalled usability; endless accessories readily available

AGAINST
Smallish screen is hard to view in bright light; high-gloss finish is more easily scratched

VERDICT
Apple's 'video' iPod puts the iconic jukebox one step of its rivals yet again. An excellent all-round entertainer

Small but beautiful screen

In action, the screen is too small for prolonged video viewing – and forget being able to see it in sunlight – but it compensates with a sharp, colourful picture that's compelling to watch, and is superb for displaying photos.

More importantly, music sounds spacious and detailed – even ripped as a relatively compressed (192bps) AAC file, Jeff Buckley's *Hallelujah* still acts as neck-hair Viagra, thanks to the iPod's involving delivery. Switch to songs ripped in Apple Lossless format and you hear even more. Layered, potentially harsh tracks like Iggy Pop's *Lust for Life* thunder through in all their glory, and it's easy to forget you're actually listening to compressed music on a pocket-sized player.

Video soundtracks are equally impressive – music sounds suitably lively and dialogue is delivered crisply and clearly.

As ever, you'll only get the best from the iPod if you ditch those mugger-alerting in-ear headphones that come as standard and buy yourself a better pair: our Award-winning Sennheiser PX100s (£35) are an ideal partner.

Almost as essential an investment are one or several of the cables and docking systems mentioned here and in our *Buyer's Guide*: this iPod's sonic potential deserves to be shared with a larger audience than your ears only.

TECH SPECS

HARD DRIVE 60GB
SONG CAPACITY 15,000 (4 min songs ripped at 128kbps)
VIDEO CAPACITY 150 hours
PHOTO CAPACITY 25,000
AUDIO FORMATS AAC, Protected AAC (from iTunes MusicStore), MP3, Audible, Apple Lossless, WAV
VIDEO FORMAT H.264/MPEG-4
DISPLAY 2.5in, 320 x 240 QVGA LCD with LED backlight
BATTERY LIFE 20 hours
WEIGHT 157g
DIMENSIONS 10 x 6 x 1cm

Music server Hi-Fi

If you want to cut out the computer altogether, or want multiroom music, try one of these...

PERHAPS YOU DON'T want to clog up your home computer with a complete catalogue of tunes? Thankfully, this doesn't mean that all your options for music storage are lost – there are a couple of fantastic, user-friendly solutions on the market. First up for your consideration we've got CD player/hard-disk drive hybrids.

What benefits do I get?

You get similar functions to a computer, in that they're fitted with a hard-disk. You can rip your CD collection at different bit-rates and have it stored in one location – on your hi-fi rack – and connect it to an amplifier in the standard way using a pair of phono interconnects.

You can now sort your tunes into simple playlists, and use the hard disk as a jukebox – ideal for non-stop party music playback, since there's no swapping of CDs involved.

Some models such as the Yamaha CDR-1500 (see *Also Consider*, below-right) also double as a CD recorder. This means you can take your vast quantity of stored tunes and compile mix-CDs of your favourite tracks.

Finally, there's the question of sound quality. Since a lot of the internal organs for these devices have been derived from CD player separates, such as the digital-to-analogue converters (DACs), they should tend to sound superior to your run-of-the-mill computer.

And the negatives?

Computers will give you a larger hard disk, which leaves more room for more music at lower compression. Also, as they don't connect up to your computer or home network, you can't swap and share files so easily.

So what's the alternative?

If you're after this sort of functionality, it's worth considering a music server, such as the Cambridge Audio 640H, which we've fully road-tested opposite.

Wirelessly share tracks between your computer and a music server, controlling your entire digital music stash at the touch of a single button

Music servers and CD player/hard-disk hybrids share similar features. Cambridge Audio's 640H can join your current rack of hi-fi kit and provide all the basic functions such as CD playback, as well as writing to a recordable disc and ripping CDs to an internal hard-disk drive.

The gorgeous handheld controller of the Sonos digital music system

So what's the difference?

However, unlike CD player/hard-disk hybrids, media servers can also hook up to your PC/Mac and broadband internet connection via a home network (wired or wireless). You can then share tracks between computer and music server, controlling your music stash at the touch of a button.

If you invest in more than one music server, you can link them up and have the luxury of multi-room music. Since you can also connect a music server to the internet, it's possible to access useful information such as track listings and album info for all your tunes. Then you won't have to enter these by hand.

Any drawbacks?

Just a couple: First, many music servers still have limited hard-disk space, so this could be a problem if you want to rip a monstrous CD collection uncompressed. Second, the quality of CD playback from these servers doesn't tend to match that of a dedicated budget CD player – but then again, CD players don't boast such an impressive array of features.

NEXT MONTH Yet more ways to make more of your MP3 collection – including the new Cyruslink multiroom music system and the best desktop speaker packages for your portable player or PC

NOW ADD THESE

STEREO AMP
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640A
★★★★★
£250

Keep things in the Azur family with Cambridge Audio's excellent 640A integrated amplifier. It mixes some rip-roaring dynamics with delicate subtlety There's also no shortage of power or resolution. And, at £250, it's not going to break the bank, either.

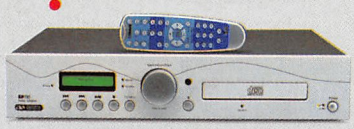
STEREO SPEAKERS
WHARFDALE DIAMOND 9.1
★★★★★
£180

It's hard to believe that these beauties only cost £180 – they sparkle with amazing sonic ability. Apart from their impressive build quality and curved cabinets, the Diamond 9.1s sound transparent and reveal a superb level of detail for the money. Well worth a listen.

WIRELESS MUSIC PACKAGE
SONOS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM
★★★★★
£950

This Sonos system is a true wireless wonder. Connect one ZonePlayer to your computer and place another in a different room for multiroom streaming. Each ZonePlayer has built-in amplifiers, so all you need add, along with your home computer, is stereo speakers.

ALSO CONSIDER



ACOUSTIC SOLUTIONS SP150
★★★★
July 2005 £150
Despite the comparatively small 40GB hard drive, the SP150 is a decent and cost-effective storage solution. The ripping process is rapid and its menus are simple enough to use.

YAMAHA CDR-1500
★★★★★
November 2005 £599
With a mammoth 250GB hard-disk drive, the Yamaha offers enough storage for around 400 uncompressed CDs. Sound quality's top-notch, and you can burn your favourite tracks to disc.

NOW TRY THIS

Cambridge Audio Azur 640H

★★★★½ £600

THE AZUR 640H is the latest addition to Cambridge Audio's fantastic Azur range of components. For £600 you get a 160GB music server/CD player/CD writer.

The front panel hosts a large, bright backlit display and navigational buttons that allow you to steer through the unit's Audiofile operating system. Alternatively, you can hook the 640H up to a display device via its composite, S-Video and PC outputs, and fight your way through the menus via the new, yet marginally frustrating remote control.

Share music wirelessly

Other connectivity features include Ethernet and USB ports, together with a set of phono inputs/outputs and both coaxial and optical digital outputs. You can connect the 640H up to a home network (wired or wireless) and share music files between the music server and a computer and play your music through iTunes or Windows Media Player.

You can hook up and transfer any music files from a portable Flash device via USB – but, unfortunately, it's incompatible with hard disk jukeboxes. This includes all iPods and players that use their own operating system, such as Sony's SonicStage.

Finally, to top off its impressive list of features, the Azur 640H can even be used to burn your favourite tunes to a recordable CD.

The internal 160GB hard disk should allow for storage of around 30,000 tracks at an MP3 bit-rate of 128kbps (other options include 64/192/320Kbps and uncompressed PCM). We found that 64kbps is a waste of time – music ripped at this rate sounds extremely poor, so stay well clear.

Working as a CD player, the 640H isn't bad at all. Music is delivered with an admirable sense of timing and there's a commendable dose of detail uncovered. Dynamics aren't bad, either. It shares the same Wolfson DACs as Cambridge's fantastic 540CV2 and 640CV2 CD players, but isn't up to the same rip-roaring standard.

Rack, stack and pack tracks

Talking of ripping, when it comes to packing your CDs onto the hard disk, the good news is that dropping from uncompressed PCM (that is, CD format) to more space-friendly 320kbps MP3 files doesn't result in a major degradation of quality. Even 192kbps is good.

There's no doubt the Azur 640H is a step in the right direction, but it still isn't the finished article in terms of features or performance. It's good, but not great.

FOR
Fine build quality; spacious hard drive; some useful features; sounds good...

AGAINST
...but could sound better; not quite as intuitive as we'd like

VERDICT
The 640H is a solid addition to Cambridge's Azur range, but not quite the finished article we'd hoped for

TECH SPECS

HARD DISK 160GB
DAC Wolfson WM8740 24-Bit/192kHz capable
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 20Hz-20kHz
PLAYBACK FORMATS Uncompressed PCM, WMA, MP3, AAC, MPEG, WAV, AIFF, Sound File, Unix Audio
INPUTS RCA phono, 3 x USB
OUTPUTS RCA phono, digital optical/coaxial, composite, S-Video, VGA, Ethernet
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 8 x 43 x 32cm
WEIGHT 8kg

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: you must use standmount speakers with **speaker stands**. Here are four pairs to consider

Test Express

SPEAKER STANDS £80-£399

Stand up for better hi-fi sound

Custom Design RS300

★★★★★ £85

THE SUB-£100 speaker-stand market is ultra-competitive, so Custom Design needs to deliver a top-class product to persuade buyers to redirect their money away from trusted companies like Atacama and Partington.

We're not averse to the minimal approach to stand design, and the RS300s' single-column look is both simple and attractive. A single bolt secures each top-plate to the large central pillar, which can be mass-loaded with any suitable filler, from silver sand to Custom Design's own inert filling material, yours at £5 a bag. The company recommends two bags per stand, which is how we tested them.

FOR
Decent timing; fast bass

AGAINST
Nothing given the price

VERDICT
An excellent buy; ideal to partner affordable kit, and stylish, too

Great all-rounders suit all tastes

Most great-sounding speaker stands can look a little industrial: witness the excellent Partingtons. But the stylish RS300s give music real pace, which

> "Bass is both well-founded and articulate, with weight and agility to match the midrange superbly"

injects energy into tunes and always keeps you entertained. Bass is both well-founded and articulate, with weight and agility to match the sparkling midrange beautifully.

True, you can get even more extension and grip from larger, heavier stands, such as the Super Dreadnoughts (£169), but otherwise, the RS300s hold their own against their aesthetically challenged opponents. That, and their price, makes them stars.

Good looks and terrific performance make the RS300s a real bargain buy

Partington Heavi

★★★★½ £399

PARTINGTON PROBABLY ISN'T a household name, but should be familiar to regular readers, and to those who've perused any of our Awards issues over the last few years. It's known for its very solid, industrially styled and highly effective metal stands. So are the Heavis (sic) more of the same, or a change of tack?

As soon as your speakers hit these stands, the Partington signature is obvious: bags of headroom, a solid soundstage, warmth and detail in the midrange, and deep bass sure to get your pulse racing in no time.

FOR
Highly detailed, composed sound

AGAINST
Not exactly cheap; similar sound can be yours for less

VERDICT
Heavi by name and by nature: very expensive, but very good, too

These Heavis have plenty of mettle

So the Heavis are another worthy addition to the Partington family tree, yes? Well, we've no complaints about their sonic performance – but we're not so sure about the £400 pricetag. Unless you

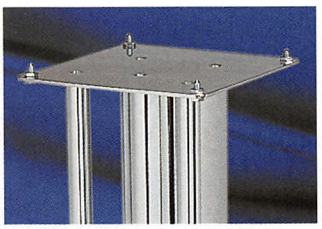
> "The Partingtons offer deep bass sure to get your pulse racing"

have a couple of grand's worth of speakers, and electronics to match, the Heavis will be wasted on you.

However, the key reason they lose a star is you can get very similar performance from the Partington Dreadnought Broadsides (£250). Still, if you demand the best, here it is.

The Heavis go a long way towards justifying that hefty price tag

KNOW HOW Think stands are just bits of bent metal? Think again: they can make a huge difference to sound quality



WE'VE ALWAYS SAID standmount speakers should be placed on dedicated speaker stands, and for good reason. The alternative is an ill-defined and boomy sound across the frequency range.

Pick the stand to suit your kit

Some speakers actively benefit from being teamed with a heavy stand, while others prefer being partnered with lightweight, open designs. Consult both the speaker manufacturer and your dealer for advice, and try to listen to each alternative if possible.

Heavy and light set-up

With lightweight stands, it's better to use small top-spikes (left) to separate the stand from the bottom of the speaker cabinet. This allows the speaker to be a separate entity to the stand. With heavy stands, using Blu-Tac is better, because firmly coupling the speaker to an inert stand allows it be used as a sonic extension of the speaker. This produces more fluid bass and a better-controlled midrange.

Some speakers demand heavy stands (right); others best suit light designs (left)

TEST RESULT Yes, variety is the spice of life – and these four stands satisfy in very different ways

WE'VE ENCOUNTERED FOUR very different variations on the speaker stand theme here: it's made for an interesting test.

The heavyweight option comes from Partington. Its £400 Heavis – and by golly they are – sound great, but you'll need a cracking pair of speakers (£2000+) to get the most out of them.

Russ Andrews offers the most unusual stands here: the Torlytes are light and unassuming, but sound fab. That warm and fluid midrange nearly earned them five stars... but not quite.

The least satisfying solution comes from Quadraspire: while we applaud a desire to be different, the Q60s sound nowhere near as special as they look.

Not so the Custom Design RS300s. These gems are a real find. Once filled, they offer both style and real ability.

Quadraspire Q60

★★★☆☆ £98+

FOR Sleek design; warm, fluid midrange; timing

AGAINST Bass is lacking; £50 extra for the wood finish

VERDICT Look good, but the sound lacks proper balance

QUADRASPIRE HAS NEVER been afraid to offer the hi-fi market an alternative approach to equipment support, and these stands are certainly different to look at.

Low mass is the key to most of Quadraspire's designs (the Q60s are amazingly light, a real contrast to the mighty Heavis), and that approach definitely has its benefits – but then again, so does having plenty of mass to anchor a speaker properly. So, do they work?

Designed for interesting interiors

The Q60s are made from MDF wooden panels, instead of the usual metal construction. As well as the black finish tested, they're also available in six veneer finishes, although this adds £50 to the price.

All fine and dandy, but sadly, that lightweight design is a major factor in the Q60s' lack of low-end definition and weight. The result is a general sense

> "There's a general feeling of dissatisfaction, despite the well-defined midrange"

of dissatisfaction, despite a warm and well-defined midrange, and easily separated instruments and vocals.

Even excellent timing can't make up for the Q60s' absence of bass. So, unless you're consciously looking to control low frequencies – the neighbours, perhaps, or an imbalance in your current set-up – we'd probably spend our money elsewhere.

The unusual appearance will appeal to some, but a lack of bass probably won't

Russ Andrews Torlyte

★★★★☆ £299

FOR Fine looks, allied to a beautifully lucid midrange

AGAINST Bass lacks the weight of some price rivals

VERDICT Terrific stands for some speakers, but a little pricey

NOT ONLY DOES Russ Andrews make good cables – it also turns an expert hand to equipment support. Like the Quadraspires, the Torlytes are another pair of stands made from wood – although in this case, it's real (not MDF), honed from an amazingly stiff honeycomb-style construction that, like Quadraspire, makes a virtue of lightness. The top plate includes substantial oak cone feet (not shown) to support your speakers.

These are stands that truly deliver

In action, the Torlytes deliver broad dynamics, teamed with a soundstage that is both well composed and vivid. Vocals, especially, are delivered with all the emotional content and warmth that gives wooden stands a good name – it's a stunning listen. Instruments sound wonderfully real, too, and the midrange is always a model of clarity and sonic accuracy.

> "Instruments sound real, and the midrange is always a model of clarity and accuracy"

Perhaps more surprisingly, the bass holds its own. Admittedly, it lacks the last ounce of weight and punch, but the Torlytes still show decent form.

Combining good looks with fine performance, the Torlytes are in the higher echelon of speaker stands. Our only reservation is that price – some alternatives will deliver similar results for less. Still, you must hear them.

The Tortlytes' light, wooden construction is amazingly stiff, thanks to clever innards

The specs of these monster **multichannel receivers** are awesome – and just wait until you hear them transform your favourite movie and music moments

Group Test

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVERS £1000

Multichannel receivers that are just grand

What's new?

This test puts the latest-and-greatest £1000 receivers from Denon, Pioneer and Yamaha together in the ring with a class-leading old-timer – well, a year is a long time in the home cinema world: Arcam's Award-winning AVR250.

What do you get for your money?

First and foremost, sound quality. These systems blow cheaper multichannel amps out of the water, giving you big movie bangs, and superb subtlety, too.

Along with great sound, you get state-of-the-art specifications. Most have HDMI video-switching, while two even have HDMI video-upconversion, so even composite signals can be outputted via this cutting-edge connection.

Other high-tech features include advanced auto set-ups, which take the pain out of installing your new buy.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Features aren't everything
Features are important, but think very carefully about going for an amplifier just because it has the latest technology. The most important thing is always sound quality, so choose your receiver with care

2 Lies, damned lies and statistics
Don't select an amplifier just on its claimed power output, either. An on-paper figure of 150 watts per channel might sound very impressive, but such figures don't directly correlate to how well the receiver will drive your speaker package, or even how loud it can go. You should also know that there are many ways a manufacturer can massage these output figures to make the amplifier look more powerful that it actually is.

3 Make sure you set it up correctly
Take the time to set up your amp properly. Even the best automated set-up procedures aren't perfect, so there's no harm in checking the results and fine-tuning things so they're spot on. This will ensure many years of cinema fun!

RATINGS EXPLAINED

A five-star rating means the receiver has top-class sound, and a decent number of useful features that'll enhance your cinema experience. A four-star system excels in some areas, with lots of features, but doesn't have the performance of the best. Don't ignore these as they might have what you need. There are no three-stars or less here.

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

"High-tech automatic set-up systems not only set your speaker distances and levels, but also measure your room response, giving you the ultimate performance"

THE CONTENDERS

Arcam AVR250
£1000
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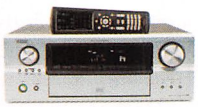

Denon AVR-3806
£1000
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Pioneer VSX-AX4AVi
£1000
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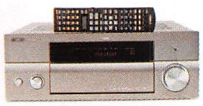

Yamaha RX-V4600
£1000
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JARGON BUSTER

HDMI upconversion: simplifies your video cabling – connect all your video sources, whatever the quality, into your amp, and it'll convert them to HDMI

BUYER'S GUIDE

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p115

Arcam AVR250

★★★★★ £1000

FOR Excellent with movies and music; impressive build; it's easy to use

AGAINST No auto set-up; soundfield isn't as engulfing as some

VERDICT If music replay is paramount it's the best choice in this test

THE AVR250 MIGHT be little more than a year old but, in this company, it seems prehistoric. The look is dating fast, and most new budget AV receivers that come our way embarrass it for features. There's no automated set-up system, let alone the kind of advanced processing and equalisation that Denon, Pioneer and Yamaha owners can take for granted nowadays.

Before Arcam makes the phone lines to WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION glow with fury, there are a few things you should know. First of all, this receiver is built superbly. It makes the Denon and Yamaha look and feel like low-end products. Just check out the flimsy back panels on both these competitors, and the relatively cheap speaker terminals they use – you'll see what we mean.

Few features keep things simple

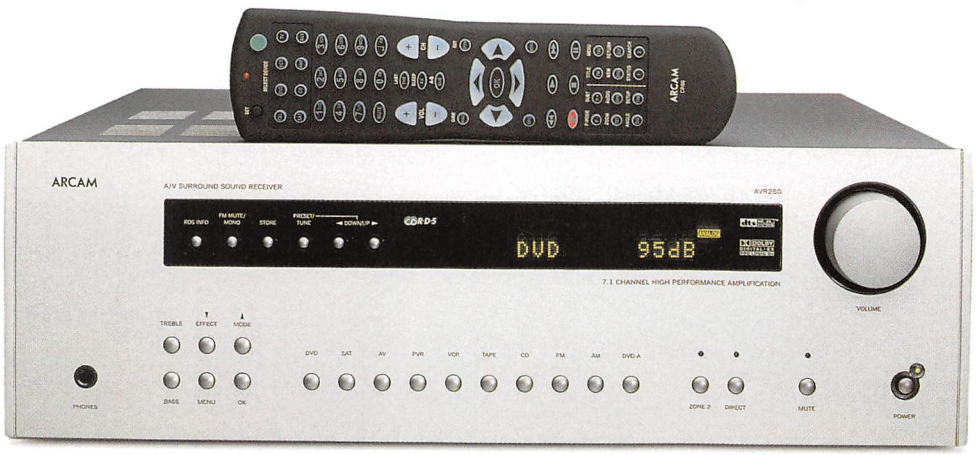
Also, the sparse feature count has an upside: this Arcam is simple to use. The menus are straightforward and, provided you have a sound pressure meter and a measuring tape, you'll have this thing running properly in about five minutes.

And running is how you'd want to keep it. The AVR250 won our Award in this price sector last year, and rightly so. Even today it stacks up as a formidable proposition. Play an atmospheric movie, such as the excellent *Batman Returns*, and the Arcam pulls you into the action with a skill that few rivals can manage. It has a rich, full-bodied presentation that gives voices emotion and high-octane action plenty of punch. There's an immensely attractive authority to the Arcam's presentation that suits all types of films – *Star Wars* or *Kill Bill*, it doesn't matter, the results are always positive.

Arcam's enviable reputation is built on top-class music gear, so it comes as no surprise to find this receiver excels with both stereo and multichannel music. We'd go so far as to say if this aspect is particularly important to you, the AVR250 should be your product of choice. No other multichannel receiver or amp at this price plays music with such cohesion and precision.

> "We'd go so far as to say that if music replay is important, this should be your choice"

Shortcomings? Well, with movies it doesn't have the seamless soundfield of some, and it lacks a touch of openness at very high frequencies. These minor points aside, the AVR250 is a product to savour.



Though the on-paper spec is poor, this excellent receiver excels in the key area: sound quality

Denon AVR-3806

★★★★☆ £1000

FOR Very well equipped; clever auto set-up system; composure

AGAINST Not the most exciting or entertaining listen; build could be better

VERDICT The AVR-3806 is a class-leader in terms of features, but its sound can bettered at this price level

IF WE WERE into gambling, there's a fair chance that all our life savings would have gone on the AVR-3806 winning this test. First of all, it's a Denon – a brand that has enjoyed something of a winning streak when it comes to multi-channel receivers, and one that has dominated this sector of late.

> "Video upconversion from composite is cool, but can't ever turn a Fiat into a Ferrari"

Second, it's packed with clever features. Highlights include HDMI connectivity with upconversion from any analogue video input. Yes, that includes lowly composite as well, though don't expect a magical upgrade in terms of picture quality: the AVR-3806 is resourceful, but even it can't make a Fiat into a Ferrari.

Automatic set-up is standard at this price (in everyone's world apart from Arcam's), but the AVR-3806 not only adjusts levels and distances, and sets your speaker parameters, but also optimises the sound for up to six people. This means the whole family benefits from the Denon's performance, not just the person sitting in the sweet spot.

There are other clever touches, such as processing adjusted to speaker characteristics and multiroom capability, but we're sure you get the picture. Only Pioneer's equally loaded VSX-AX4AVi can challenge this Denon's feature set.

Yet if, like us, you consider the sound paramount, then the AVR-3806 isn't invincible. It's still good, though. This receiver can spread a soundfield to match the best, and move sounds seamlessly from speaker to speaker. It'll go loud, too, keeping its composure well beyond the levels most would be comfortable with.

Sound lacks an ounce of brilliance

However, unlike the best, this receiver doesn't take a merciless grip of your attention, lacking the utter dynamism of the Yamaha or the fluid delivery of the Arcam. Up against such rivals, this Denon lacks the sparkle to make you sit up and notice. Sonic standards are sky-high at this price and, for once, Denon isn't setting them.

Feature-wise the Denon is stuffed to the gills, but it can be beaten for the impact of its sound

award yourself the best you can buy.

NAD's long standing reputation for producing the very best sounding audio equipment you can buy is legendary.

And NAD equipment still continues to win awards throughout the world for offering peerless performance levels and unbeatable value for money.

Why settle for less when you can award yourself the best?

Shown above, C352 Stereo Amplifier, the 2004 What Hi-fi Sound and Vision? magazine Product of the Year with its matching CD Player, the C542. Both models available in titanium or traditional grey finishes.

HI-FI CHOICE GOLD AWARD AWARDS 2005

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO AMPLIFIER
NAD C352CT

NAD

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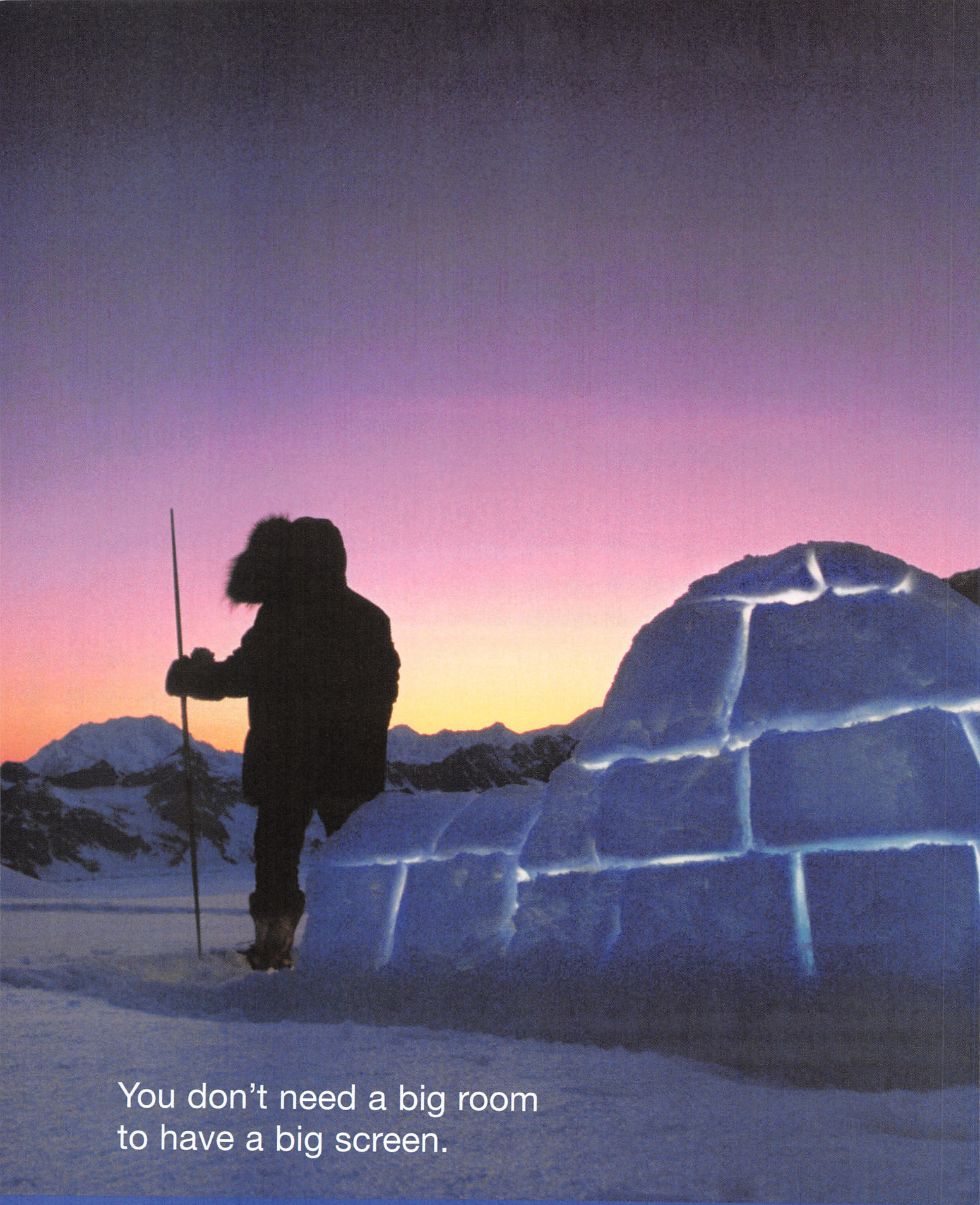
Call: 01908 319360

www.NADelectronics.com



You don't need a big room to have a big screen.

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EXCEED YOUR VISION

Pioneer VSX-AX4AVi

★★★★☆ £1000

JUST WHEN IT seemed that Pioneer's multichannel engineers had lost their way, the company produces the VSX-AX4AVi. This return to form has been fine-tuned by Air Studios (owned by Beatles' producer Sir George Martin).

And on the whole, it's been a success. This is a fine all-round performer that pushes the class-leaders very hard in most areas, and misses out on the full five-star rating by a narrow margin.

FOR
Feature count; sonic performance that has power and grace

AGAINST
Sound can be beaten in several areas

VERDICT
It's worth considering, but others outshine it

As with all the contenders here (bar the Arcam), this is a fully loaded proposition, which means automatic set-up with speaker equalisation, HDMI upconversion and a pair of i-Link inputs.

Automatic set-up is pick of the bunch

Pioneer's automatic set-up impresses with its sophistication and accuracy. The company has been developing its system longer than most rivals, and it shows. Also, anyone with an iPod is in for a bit of a treat, because this receiver allows you to connect up and operate your player via the remote and an on-screen display.

Up and running, it's unflappable: play *Star Wars: The Revenge of the Sith* at high levels and this unit kicks out seismic lows and large-scale dynamics with ease. There's no hardening of the sound and only a hint of excess top-end aggression.

However, don't go thinking the Pioneer only does muscle: it captures the atmosphere of the quieter dialogue scenes from *Batman Begins* with skill, delivering the

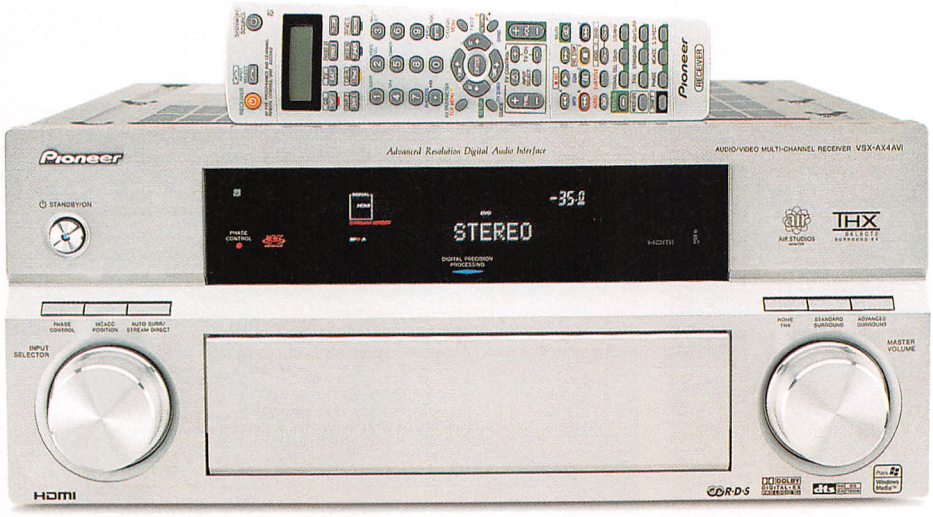
> "With *Star Wars*, the Pioneer kicks out seismic lows and large-scale dynamics"

verbal nuances that make Morgan Freeman such a riveting actor.

With music, this receiver remains strong: there's decent detail and plenty of punch. However, it's not as good as the Arcam – we'd still direct you towards the AVR250's better rhythmic drive.

The Pioneer's sonic shortcomings are relatively minor: it doesn't have the dynamic enthusiasm of Yamaha's RX-V4600 with multichannel source material, nor the sheer insight that Arcam's AVR250 displays. So while it isn't far away in either case, the shortfalls are enough to lose it a star.

Very good isn't quite enough for five stars for the unfortunate Pioneer – competition is that fierce



Yamaha RX-V4600

★★★★★ £1000

THIS IS THE one everyone is trying to beat. The RX-V4600 is our favourite multichannel receiver at this price – and for good reason. It's a consummate all-rounder with very few weaknesses.

Let's get those out of the way first, and remember we're nit-picking,

> "Its many sonic strengths combine to give a spectacular surround sound experience"

because this receiver would be pretty difficult to criticise if we didn't.

If music replay is the most important thing for you, buy the AVR250. The Arcam is the only product in this test that produces truly musical results. The Yamaha performs well with music, but we'd always qualify that with the words 'for a multichannel receiver'.

If you want to impress your friends with clever features, go for Denon's AVR-3806 or Pioneer's VSX-AX4AVi. Both beat the Yamaha's impressive spec.

Our Award-winner in 2005 shows just why it's got the mettle to stay on top – just awesome

FOR
Dynamic and insightful sound with both movies and music; good spec

AGAINST
Not very luxurious in terms of build

VERDICT
This Yamaha is a superb all-rounder that ticks all the boxes. It sounds great and is well-equipped, too

Last on our list of negatives comes build quality. Don't get us wrong: we have no doubt that the RX-V4600 will give many years of great service and nothing is going to fall off soon – but we like a £1000 receiver to feel like a grand's worth of product. There's little to differentiate this receiver from Yamaha's budget models when it comes to case solidity or the quality of connections on the back, and that's just not good enough.

That's it for the negatives. Play one of the many battle scenes from *Star Wars: The Revenge of the Sith* and this Yamaha can't fail to impress. It has the authority and detail of the Arcam, but adds a dose of openness to proceedings. Dynamics are crushing, yet there's enough subtlety to make the most of the clunky dialogue.

An unmatched movie experience

The surround soundfield is seamless and utterly convincing, something highlighted by the creepily atmospheric dockyard scene in *Batman Begins*,

These strengths are important, and confirm what we thought when gave the RSX-V4600 our 2005 best-in-class Award. Its many, impressive capabilities combine to give a spectacular movie experience.

TRIANGLE
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The TORUS
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sub-woofer seem rather
out-of-date.

Wilson benesch

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TEST RESULT Looking at the detailed star ratings below, you'll see how close it is, but **Yamaha** edges it...

YAMAHA RX-V4600

★★★★★

£1000

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

THERE'S NO POINT in delaying the verdict, because the answer should be crystal clear by now: the Yamaha RX-V4600 is the best all-rounder here. It's easy to use, has clear set-up menus and sounds the best with movies. Nothing else here serves up the same level of thrills as this Yamaha in flow with a large-scale block-buster like the latest *Star Wars* flick. It's well equipped, too, which is more than can be said about our silver medallist, Arcam's AVR250.

"Nothing else here serves up the same level of thrills as this Yamaha in full flow"

This receiver might not set sky-high standards when it comes to specs, but it still performs superbly where it matters most, sound quality. It's the most musical contender in this group, and we'd recommend it if stereo and multichannel music are high on your list of priorities.

The Pioneer and the Denon are both superb bits of kit, too – but the quality of the opposition is too good for them. Great features can't hide the fact that the others sound better. Saying that, we look forward to the next fight as hot as this...

NOW ADD THESE

PROJECTOR
THEMESCENE H79
★★★★★
£ 3000

You can pay much less for a projector – prices start around £700 for quality models – and even HD-Ready examples are available for half this amount. But this is a top-class projector that deserves to dominate its price class. It produces an exquisite picture packed with detail, rich colours and fine black definition – sublime!

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKERS
MONITOR AUDIO SILVER RS6 AV
★★★★★
£ 1900

Style speaker packages can look and sound great, but a receiver as capable as the Yamaha RX-V4600 deserves a 'proper' full-size speaker package to make the most of it. These Monitor Audios aren't the most unobtrusive, but they look great, are built superbly and sound truly fabulous.

DVD PLAYER
YAMAHA DVD-S2500
★★★★★
£ 700

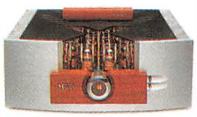
This is the natural partner for the RX-V4600. Yamaha hasn't always produced class-leading DVD players – but then all manufacturers have their ups and downs – and the DVD-S2500 universal player sets very high standards for the money. And it's even good with music.

TOTAL SYSTEM £6600

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £1000	ARCAM AVR250	DENON AVR-3806	PIONEER VSX-AX4AVi	YAMAHA RX-V4600
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£ 1000	£ 1000	£ 1000	£ 1000
TUNER PRESETS	30	56	30	40
CHANNELS/POWER	7 x 75 watts	7 x 120 watts	7 x 130 watts	7 x 130 watts
PROCESSING/ DECODING MODES	Dolby Pro-Logic II/x, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Discrete DTS 96/24	Dolby Pro-Logic II/x, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Discrete, DTS 96/24	Dolby Pro-Logic II/x, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Discrete, DTS 96/24, THX, THX EX	Dolby Pro-Logic II/x, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Discrete, DTS 96/24, THX, THX EX
EXTERNAL INPUTS	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1
PREOUTS	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1
DIGITAL AUDIO IN	3 x coaxial, 3 x optical	2 x coaxial, 5 x optical	Coaxial, 5 x optical	? Coaxial, 4 x optical
DIGITAL AUDIO OUT	Coaxial, optical	Optical	Optical	2 x optical
VIDEO INPUTS	3 x component, 5 x S-Video, 5 x composite	2 x HDMI, 3 x compo-nent, 7 x S-Video, 7 x composite	HDMI, component	2 x HDMI, 3 x compo-nent, 7 x S-Video, 7 x composite
PC IN	Yes	No	Yes	No
AUTO SET-UP	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
SIZE (HWD)	15 x 43 x 42cm	17 x 43 x 43cm	19 x 42 x 46cm	17 x 44 x 44cm
WEIGHT kg	16kg	18kg	16kg	19kg
HOW THEY RATED				
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
FEATURES	★★★☆☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★☆
VERDICT	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★

TUNER PRESETS All these multichannel amplifiers are actually receivers, because they each have an analogue tuner built-in.
CHANNELS All have seven channels, which means they can power a seven-speaker configuration, or they can be set up to power a 5.1 system and have the remaining two channel either running a second zone or biamping the front pair of speakers for improved performance.
POWER The headline figure doesn't tell you much about your receiver's performance.
SURROUND MODES All of these receivers have the main decoding (Dolby Digital and DTS) modes covered, as well as being able to process sound into an approximation of surround sound using a stereo source (Dolby Pro-Logic).
INPUTS Includes analogue and digital inputs.
PREOUTS Allow the signal to be transferred unamplified for – say – driving active speakers.
COAXIAL/DIGITAL INPUTS Suitable for audio from digital sources, such as DVD players and CD players equipped with a compatible output. Both provide superior-quality sound to more basic analogue phono connections.
FIREWIRE INPUT This is an ultra-fast, high-quality connection used for digital audio.
PC INPUT If your multichannel receiver is to be a hub for a complete home entertainment system it needs to be able to use a computer as a source.
COAXIAL/DIGITAL OUTPUTS A digital signal can be piped directly to a recording device with a digital input, such as a CD recorder or computer.



MULTICHANNEL AMP
Pathos Cinema X
£4750

STEREO SPEAKERS
Acoustic Energy
Reference AE3 MkII
£5750 Page 102

PRE/POWER AMPS
Cairn Nitro/K1As
£10,995 Page 103

Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT UNCOVERED

Hear the real X factor

Fed up with surround sound amps that look like ugly silver slabs and boast features you'll never use? The stunning new **Pathos Cinema X** may be just the music and movie solution for you

MULTICHANNEL VALVE AMPLIFIER
PATHOS CINEMA X
★★★★★
£ 4750

FOR
Stunning sound with music and film – it's a multichannel version of its stereo sibling; beauty of which a supermodel would be jealous

AGAINST
No surround sound processing included

VERDICT
If you can justify the price tag, and you're not worried about internal surround processing, we can't recommend this highly enough

EVERY NOW AND again we're privileged enough to encounter a piece of kit that has the ability to bring a grown man to his knees, bawling like the day he left the womb. The Pathos Cinema X is one of those products – for both looks *and* performance.

Collective gasps fill the room as the Pathos is exhumed from its container. "It's so beautiful, I might have to divorce my wife so I can get one in my house" is a typically strong reaction. It looks as if God has taken a holiday to spend an entire week carving the Cinema X from a solid block of metal – and He didn't rest until He got it absolutely right.

It even has a remote. True, there are only four buttons, but all the Pathos' features can be accessed using various simple combinations. The set-up is amazingly simple – five minutes and you're away, no muss, no fuss. Yet the best part of this multichannel amp is its sound.

No-compromise engineering

Pathos seems to have approached the multichannel market in a different way from most rivals: the Cinema X has no surround sound processing or decoding of any kind. Instead of creating a multichannel amp first, and a stereo design as a second thought, the company has instead attempted to create a no-compromise sonic solution in one box.

As a result, the valve-based Cinema X gives 110 watts into five channels, or 450 watts into two channels, and just as importantly, it boasts quite extraordinary sonic ability. Both in multichannel and in stereo, the Pathos oozes confidence. The mid-range is expressive and well separated, allowing loads of room for vocals to breathe, while at the same time, instruments sound full-bodied and rich. The treble has bags of headroom, and never sounds forced or hard. With some surround-sound equipment, stereo dynamics are often stunted, but not so here: it's just another polished facet to the Cinema X's gleaming, jewel-like sonic performance.

Watch it, or you'll get your fingers burned

When a movie soundtrack switches from vast expanses of open air to small rooms, the Pathos has no trouble conveying that shift, a challenge some more expensive, less-subtle kit struggles with. The soundfield is solid and engaging, never allowing any impression of a hole in the sound. However, make sure it has ample room to breathe, otherwise you'll be able to cook your breakfast on it after a couple of hours use.

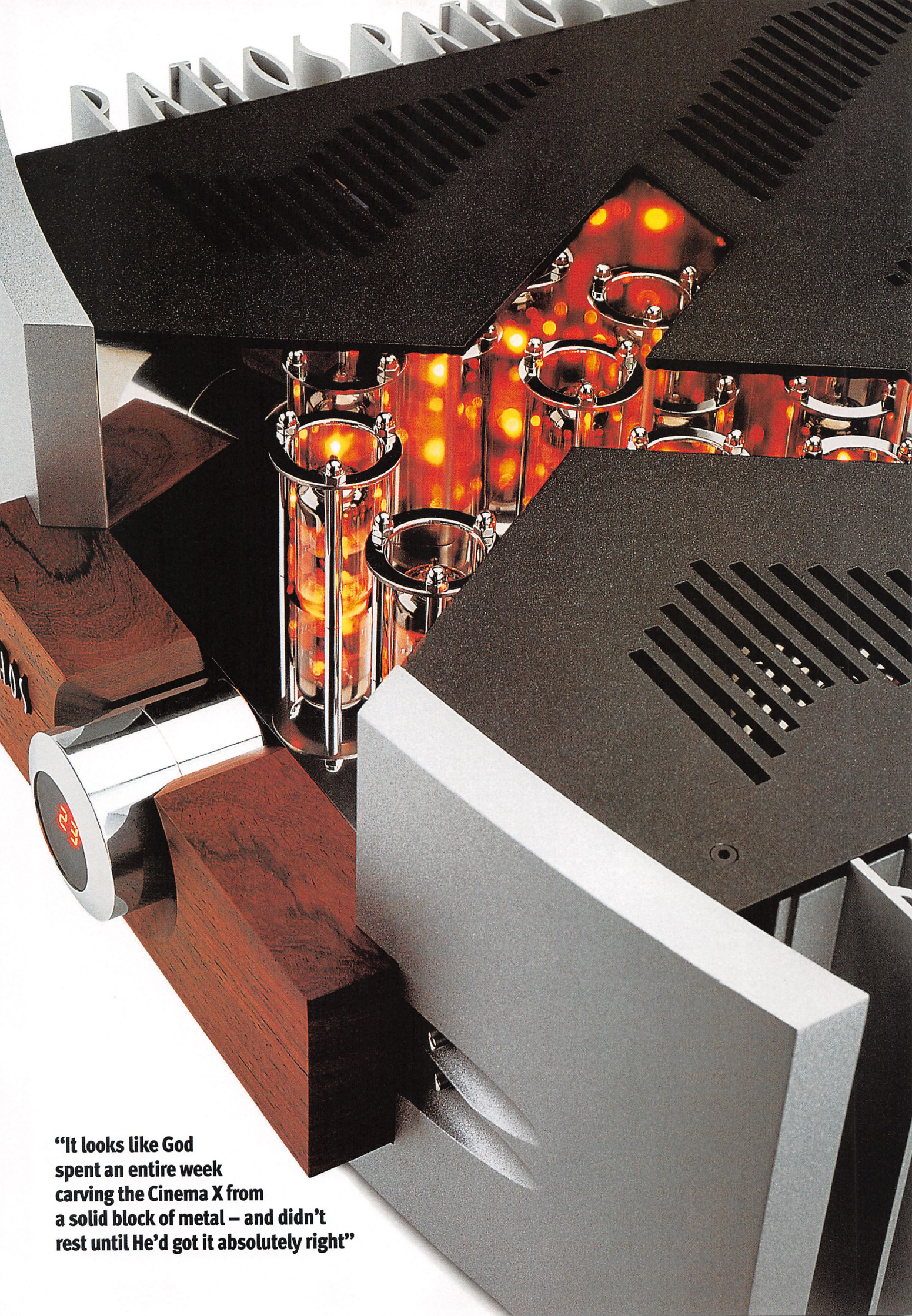
Since the Pathos has no cinema decoding or processing of its own, the sonic results you get are also dependent on the quality of the DVD player you use. The Cinema X scores highly because no processing interferes with the signal path – it's just signal in and sound out – but by the same token, if the incoming signal is of low quality, you'll hear it. We used Denon's mighty £2500 DVD-A1XV; a Meridian G91DAB (£3895), with its analogue and digital audio inputs to support additional sources, would work well, too.

It says Pathos through and through

The Pathos Cinema X will astound you with its no-compromise approach to sound reproduction. If you're seeking exceptional stereo performance as well as stellar surround sound from one box, this is the amp for you. If you need more convincing, those heat-sinks say Pathos all the way...

TECH SPECS

PATHOS CINEMA X
STEREO INPUTS 4
MULTICHANNEL INPUTS 3
POWER 110 watts into five channels; 450 watts into two channels
SPEAKER TERMINALS Five sets
SUBWOOFER PREOUT Yes
PROCESSING None
DIGITAL INPUTS/OUTPUTS None
REMOTE CONTROL Yes
WEIGHT 30kg



"It looks like God spent an entire week carving the Cinema X from a solid block of metal – and didn't rest until He'd got it absolutely right"

Clearly different AEs

We raved about the AE3s' little standmount brothers, the AE1 MkIIIs, and **Acoustic Energy** has another highly individual pair of speakers here. Like a classic sports car, if you treat them right, they'll reward you amply

STEREO SPEAKERS
ACOUSTIC ENERGY
REFERENCE AE3 MK II
★★★★½
£ 4490

FOR
Midrange clarity; excellent detail resolution; superb build and finish

AGAINST
Can sound clinical and lack warmth; overly fussy about recordings

VERDICT
These are fine floorstanders that impress with their insight and crisp presentation

SOME PEOPLE WILL automatically dismiss the AE3s because of their four-star rating. Well, that would be a mistake. Four stars says the product does certain things better than others and, for those with similar leanings in taste, such a product could well be preferable to a five-star alternative.

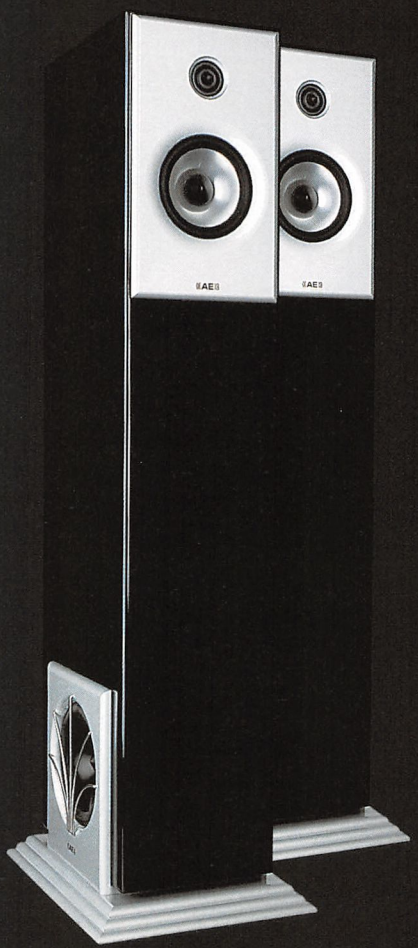
That's the AE3s all over: they won't suit everyone, but those who love clarity and control will adore them.

Intriguing side-firing bass

Think of these as floorstanding versions of the Award-winning AE1 Mk IIIs (see p109) with a pair of side-firing bass drivers included for good measure.

Electrically, this is a three-way design, with the forward-facing metal cone driver dealing with just the midrange frequencies, rather than everything from midrange downwards as it does in the smaller speakers.

The result is that the AE3s are as clean and transparent with vocals as we've heard from a conventional box speaker.



Nina Simone's *Feeling Good* comes across with unrestrained intensity: each inflection in her voice is communicated with skill, while dynamics remain vivid within the speaker's natural operating range. Push it hard, and things start to compress earlier than some rivals, but for most people, the AE3s go loud enough.

Acoustic Energy has judged their integration well, leaving no sign of the sonic joins between the drivers: even the twin bass units housed at the base of the cabinet are all-but-impossible to isolate sonically. The result is an even tonal balance, as long as the speakers have plenty of room to breathe. This is a must not only for tonal reasons, but also because stereo imaging and lower-midrange clarity suffer if you put them too close to a back wall or – heaven forbid – into a corner.

> "The AE3s are as clean and transparent as we've heard from conventional speakers"

Positioning aside, these are fussy speakers to optimise. Get it right, and they'll shine in most respects. Don't put in the effort and they sound quite ordinary. The AE3s need a powerful, rich-sounding amplifier to sound best, because without power they sound a touch weedy, and without richness they err towards coolness – not Fonzie cool, you understand, more like Mr Spock. Their presentation is a touch clinical and lacks warmth, so needs a little help to sound totally natural.

Please pamper your speakers

The fussiness of the AE3s extends to system and recording quality, too: if you get either of these wrong, then these speakers won't simply tell you about shortcomings, they'll use a megaphone to broadcast the fact.

All quality speakers require good electronic partners and well-produced discs to sound their best, but the AE3s are unusually demanding in this respect, yet don't offer massively greater amounts of detail resolution than any of the immediate competition.

So there you have it. Pamper Acoustic Energy's AE3s and they're great for most of the time. Don't, and you'll wonder why they cost so much.

TECH SPECS

TYPE Three-way reflex-loaded floorstander
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 42Hz-20kHz (±2.5dB)
POWER HANDLING 125 watts
MAX OUTPUT LEVEL 108dB @ 1m
IMPEDANCE 6 ohms, 4.6 ohms min
SENSITIVITY 90dB/w/m
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 99x19x29 cm
WEIGHT 30kg
FINISH Piano black

Nitro's dynamite, while K1As fizzle

Cairn's new pre/power stereo amp combination fails to blow us away

STEREO PRE/POWER AMPLIFIERS
CAIRN NITRO
★★★★★
£1500
K1A MONOBLOCS
★★★☆☆
£1500 x 2

FOR
Stylish design; organic and refined sound; great preamp

AGAINST
Power amps sound soft and undynamic

VERDICT
The Nitro preamp is superb for the money, but is let down by the monobloc powers – we hope the other power amps in Cairn range are better

IT ISN'T OBVIOUS from the name where Cairn products originate – adding a Gallic drawl to the pronunciation is a clue. In fact, this pre/power combo is the French firm's first foray into the UK market.

Ah, monobloc – even the word sounds powerful. It's just a shame the K1As aren't. They're rated at 50 watts, and the claim is that they can double that figure as speaker impedance halves, but it doesn't sound that way to us.

Using a variety of speakers, from PMC's mighty IB2s to Spendor's dinky little S3es, these amps just don't have the drive or attack to satisfy. Turn the volume up and the bass almost disappears, while dynamics are squashed.

There's a more powerful version of the K1, designed to suit more demanding speakers – this might help, but does not excuse the standard model's limitations.

Preamp let down by power

These shortcomings overshadow what the Nitro/K1A combo does well: delivery is as sweet and fluid as you like, making rivals sound mechanical with rhythms and vocals. Nina Simone's *My Baby Just Cares* comes across in a lovely, smooth, organic way.

In short, the power amps aren't good enough for the Nitro preamp, which exhibits enormous clarity and sparkle.

Unevenness also applies to the build: sturdy cases, precise controls, and the soft-touch paint finish are great, but there are lapses – such as untidy cut-outs for the power amp's top vents and the poor finish to the stylish metal remote.

That's these Cairns all over: excellent in parts, but not quite the complete thing.

Sound Advice

READER RESCUE | MP3 | HI-FI | HOME CINEMA

TVs & Projectors

Q&A Can I play my music through my TV?; I want a CRT; which projector is right for me?; my lovely TV screen is going crazy; do I buy CRT, LCD or plasma?

Playing music through your TV

SYSTEM Toshiba Dolby Digital TV, DVD player connected via component video and optical digital audio

PROBLEM Can I play my CDs through the television speakers? Some of my CDs are in Dolby Surround, but most aren't.

SOLUTION We won't vouch for the audio quality, but you can play CDs through your TV. A Dolby Digital decoder will automatically shift to a 'lesser' form of audio, whether encoded Dolby Surround or plain stereo, and send it to all the speakers in your system – even TV speakers.

You don't even need to use Dolby Surround CDs (unless you want to), as any Dolby processor will automatically cope with a stereo signal, whether encoded in Nicam stereo (as in off-air broadcasts), Dolby Digital (as in DVDs),or PCM stereo (from CDs).

Might we suggest an inexpensive upgrade? Replace the front speakers on your TV

with something cheap yet musical from Wharfedale: the £100 Diamond 9.0s (above) should work fine with your TV's amplification.

The right TV for my room

PROBLEM I want a big-screen, and have room for a CRT. I mainly use the set to watch films from DVD, while my son occasionally watches TV. My viewing room is 4m by 4m, with the TV in a corner. Is it worth thinking about a projector to add to the mix?

SOLUTION A 36in screen is ideal for a 4m viewing distance. A 32in set more ideally suits 2.5m-3.5m. But let's be clear: you've told us your room is 4m by 4m, but that doesn't mean that your viewing distance (from your seat to your screen) is also 4m.

Use a tape measure to find out the distance from your eyes (when seated) to the screen you currently use. If the resulting measurement is in the order of 3m, then go for a smaller 32in set. If not, go for the 36in set.

The 32in Panasonic TX32DTM1 is fine set with integrated Freeview and an fantastic picture. It nominally

DLP, LCD OR PLASMA?

PROBLEM I am about to purchase my first home cinema system, and hence bought your magazine for some advice. So my question is: with perhaps a £1000 budget for the screen, should I buy a CRT, plasma or LCD TV, or a projector?

SOLUTION Naturally, you're going to want a clear-cut answer, not a 'it depends' cop-out... but y'know what? It depends...

Okay, before you throw the mag away in frustration, let's iron one or two things out. The plasma option can be dismissed: there's nothing wrong with the technology, and the best sets are still fabulous buys – but your £1000 budget just won't buy anything that capable. The most you'll be able to afford will be a lower-resolution (non-HD-Ready) model from a less-well-known brand, and we'd avoid that option unless you absolutely must have the biggest screen for your cash.

Having said that, on the subject of size... projectors can be very good, indeed, even at £1000 or

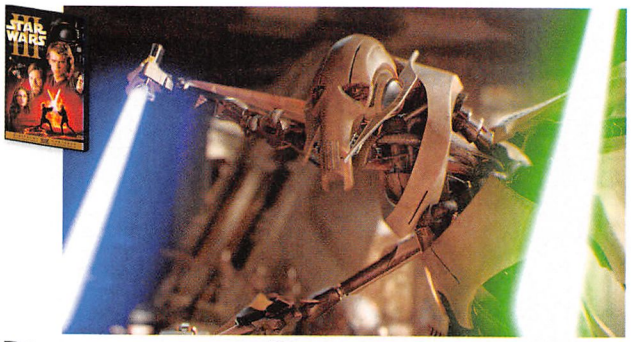
Seven pages of expert advice from the best team in the business. Whatever your home cinema or music system query, we're here to help

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
For TV & projector queries email
tvanswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

PLAYLIST

Want to test your display's picture quality? Invest in these great discs



STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH
A high-intensity thrill-ride sure to stretch even the most composed home cinema, this outstanding disc features a soundtrack designed by surround legend Ben Burtt – but the picture is, amazingly, even better. The all-digital transfer boasts a rich and beautifully colourful picture that should leap from your screen.

MOST TESTING SCENE
Chapter 3 – The battle over Coruscant threatens to swamp your senses with its dizzying maneouvres, dazzling explosions and extraordinary special effects.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic widescreen
SOUND Dolby Digital EX

★★★★★

GREEN STREET
Elijah Wood won't be the next Mark Hamill – we've seen better films, but Frodo adapts to hooliganism surprisingly well. A great tester for motion-blurring. And blood...
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1

★★★★☆

KUNG FU HUSTLE
A firm office fave, this pulsating martial arts flick blends innovative camera angles with a zany willingness to play with film speed. It's seriously funny, too.
VISION 2.40:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital, DTS 5.1

★★★★★

FANTASTIC FOUR
Critically panned, this largely solid superhero actioner has its moments: The Human Torch's 'flame on' fireball will test any screen's ability to handle fast motion.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS 5.1

★★★★★

UNLEASHED
Martial arts with a twist: directed by Luc Besson, set in a grimy Glasgow, and filmed with a *Lock, Stock*-style sepia tint that will test your display's ability to render colour.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1

★★★★☆

less. Optoma's H27 or the ScreenPlay 4805 (£699 and £799) could make you very happy. However, bear in mind projectors require replacement bulbs every 2000-3000 hours of use (around £250), and they also need to be used with a proper screen for the best results (say, £200 for something decent). Most importantly of all, projectors need to be used in a properly darkened room: this is fine for a film or the big match, but not necessarily suitable for *EastEnders*.

That means we reckon the best, most-usable television solution would be either a CRT or an LCD. And since we consider High Definition compatibility to be a paramount asset for the future, that rules CRT out of the equation: you can buy HD-Ready CRT TVs, but not in the UK. So, there you have it: we'd buy a decent 32in LCD TV. With £1000, you should be able to get a Toshiba 32WL56 easily, which will offer you hours of excellent broadcast TV and DVD watching.

ScreenPlay's excellent 4805 projector cost £1300 when we first tested it

costs £700, but you'll find it for £500. It's a little limited in sockets (no component video), but that's our only slight whinge. Team it with a good budget projector, such as the ScreenPlay 4805 or HP ep7122 (both £799) for a more flexible viewing combination.

As for a 36in CRT? They're rarer than rocking-horse shoes these days. You might still find the fine Toshiba 36ZP48 (pictured, left). It cost £1700 when we first reviewed it, and you should find it for around £1000 now.

Linking DVD player and projector

PROBLEM I have over a thousand DVDs, and have decided to take the plunge with a new DVD player and projector. Based on the advice of your wonderfully informative magazine, I'm going for the Toshiba SD-350E and a ScreenPlay 4800. Which cable would give the best picture quality?

SOLUTION The system you're proposing looks the part (though you don't mention audio kit – essential for getting the best out all those DVDs). We've only one tweak: substitute the ScreenPlay 4800, which uses a 4:3 display, for the £799 4805. This latter model uses a true 16:9 display, of 853 x 480 resolution – it better suits the aspect ratio of your DVD collection.

Cable-wise? Go for a QED HDMI-P HDMI cable, with pricing depending on length. You'll also need to buy an adapter to suit the ScreenPlay's M1-DA digital video input socket.

My new TV screen's going crazy

SYSTEM Panasonic TX-32PD50 TV

PROBLEM My new TV has blue smears in one corner of the picture. My dealer said this is caused by my speakers. How do I prevent this?

SOLUTION Your problem is caused by magnetic interference from your speakers: they're interfering with your TV's 'steering coils', the bits that steer the electron beam, creating the image.

There are three solutions: first, replace your existing speakers with shielded speakers, which are common nowadays: each speaker's magnet is shrouded to prevent interference with your TV. Second, move your speakers at least 60cm or more from your TV screen. And lastly, buy an LCD or a plasma – neither technology is affected by magnets.

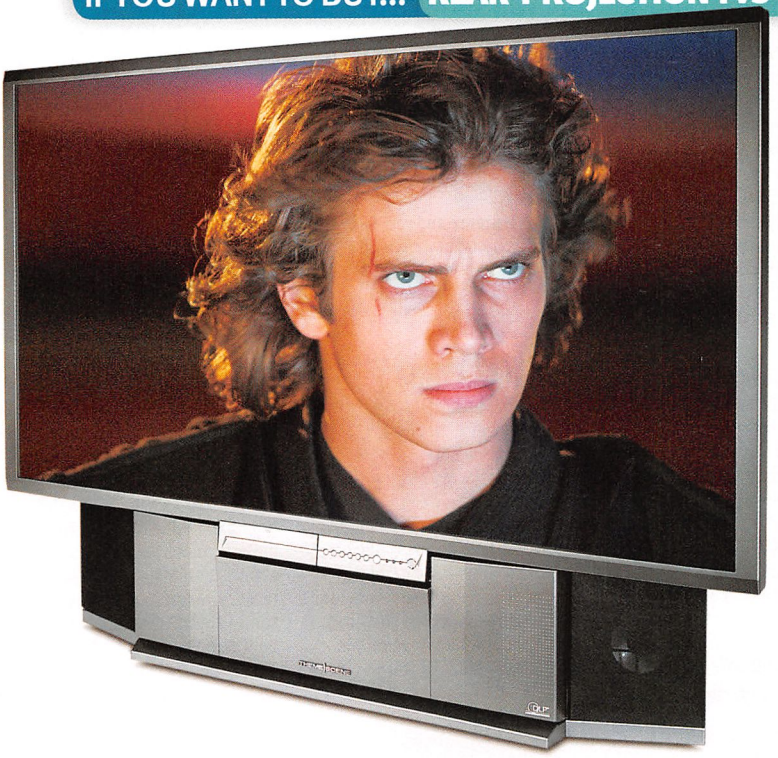
IF YOU WANT TO BUY... REAR-PROJECTION TVs

HOW DOES A REAR-PROJECTION TV SET WORK?
A small projector fires on to a mirror, which reverses the image to 'bounce' it onto the inner face of the viewing screen

WHAT WILL I LOVE?
You'll get a huge image for a very reasonable price: most 50in sets cost £2000 or less. With the best DLP sets, image quality is great, too

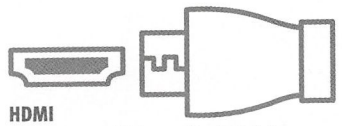
WHAT WILL I HATE?
You can't wall-mount them! More seriously, the picture tends to look less impressive if you stand up or sit to one side of the room

WHAT ELSE DO I LOOK OUT FOR?
Very cheap rear-projection sets should be avoided. The best examples use DLP technology (just like projectors), which gives a much brighter, punchier picture. Prices start at around £1500 for a 46in set

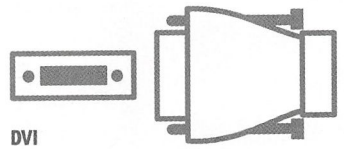


KNOW HOW Analogue and digital video cable types

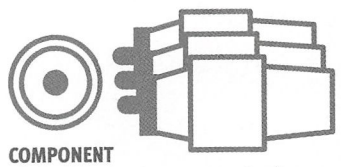
Reading down the page, we start with the best...



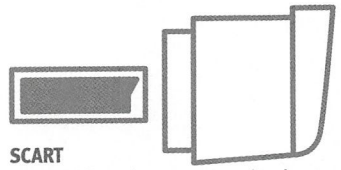
HDMI
HDMI accepts high-quality digital video and audio signals for a source with a suitable output. Part of the HD-ready spec.



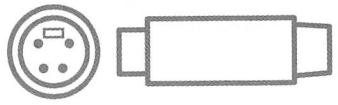
DVI
Similar to the above (HDMI-DVI adapters exist), except DVI is video only. Also part of the High-Definition TV specification.



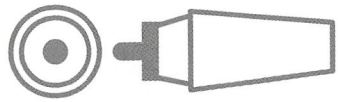
COMPONENT
The premium analogue connection for sources, though it doesn't carry sound.



SCART
Capable of carrying stereo sound and up to RGB-quality video signals in one cable.



S-VIDEO
Lesser quality, but still used for some VCRs, set-top boxes, and also games consoles.



COMPOSITE
The standard type of cable that's used to carry low-quality video. Avoid if possible.

ALSO ADD THESE

MAINS CABLE
Get a cleaner signal to your TV screen with a mains-lead upgrade. It's not black magic, they really do work. Cost from £45.

PHONO (RCA)
If you choose to connect your source using a video-only connection – such as DVI, component, or certain Scart leads – you'll also need a separate connection for the sound. Connect a pair of phono cables from your source to your television or home cinema amp's phono inputs for the audio.

Q&A Recommend a DVD player with HDMI; Microsoft Media Center offers options; better images on flatscreens; monster Denon amps!

Just dive into home cinema...

SYSTEM Panasonic DVD-S97 DVD player, Panasonic TH37-PV500PED television, Sky satellite digibox

PROBLEM I'm about to take the plunge and buy the above system, but before I splash the cash I wanted to check a few things. First, how do all the leads connect? Second, I'm having trouble finding the Panasonic DVD-S97 – are there any other similarly performing DVD players with an HDMI digital output?

SOLUTION Choosing the best quality connection, which is the HDMI one, you can connect your DVD player to your screen. Connect your Sky satellite digibox to your television using the best-available option, which is the Scart connection. And that's your lot – just two cables are required.

The Panasonic DVD-S97 received a five-star review back in August 2005, but was sadly discontinued soon after (which still annoys us). You might be able to pick one up online, but otherwise we suggest the mighty Toshiba SD-350E for just £100, or the Denon DVD-1920 (below) for £250, which is exceptionally good.

Media centre PC dilemma

SYSTEM Sony 28FQ75 TV, Sony DVP-S735D DVD player, Sony STR-DB940 multichannel amp, broadband internet connection

PROBLEM I'm looking to upgrade my system. In terms of a screen, I'm looking at a Loewe or Panasonic 26in or 32in LCD, depending on partner-approval, but I'm also intrigued by PCs running Windows Media Center software. What do you think of those machines that are currently available?

SOLUTION Well, we can't argue with your screen choice. Both the Loewe and Panasonic LCD screens at that size are superb. Media centre (or 'Center' as Microsoft likes to call them) PCs are something we have had our eyes on for some time now, and we think they will only get more powerful, more useful and – as prices drop – more desirable. The quality of video and audio performance

available now can be superb – see the reference standard Uvem 200/10000 RA Classic as an admittedly expensive benchmark. At the other end of the scale the Elonex Artisan LX (£999, above) can do the business, too. Our only bone of contention is their reliability; they are computers after all and crashes can and do happen. They're getting more stable, but you have to be prepared for them to have computer-like hang-ups if you're going to live with them and enjoy all their extra functionality. We've no doubt they are the future: choose carefully, and you could be making a very shrewd purchase.

Ditching my CRT for a flatscreen

PROBLEM As much as I like my CRT TV, I'm gearing myself up for moving into the world of flatscreens. I view a lot of camcorder footage that I've copied to disc myself, and was disappointed by the results when I got the chance to view the discs on a flatscreen in my local AV shop. How can I improve the picture on a flat screen? Is scaling the answer?

SOLUTION We can't help thinking your query throws up more questions than answers. What connection was used? Was the picture being scaled? How good was the DVD player? What we can do is give some simple advice. Ideally, go for a DVD player with an

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
For home cinema queries email
cinemaanswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

PLAYLIST

The new movies that will showcase your surround sound system

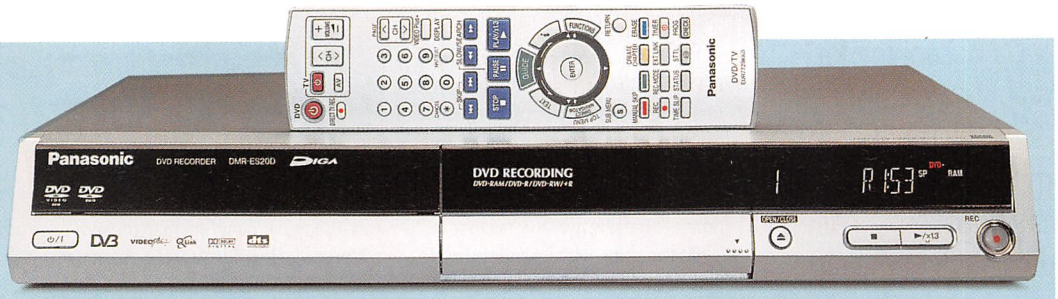
BATMAN BEGINS
This is a terrifyingly good test disc that could have been our top disc for either sound or vision this month. The monstrous Batmobile steals the show whenever it rumbles onto the screen, creating a floor-battering sound that'll leave sub-lovers and petrol-heads alike salivating.
MOST TESTING SCENE
Chapter 17 – The Batmobile makes its entrance and your sub gets an almighty shakedown – have it too loud at your peril!
VISION 2.40:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★★

U2: VERTIGO LIVE FROM CHICAGO
U2 were one of the first bands to get on the music DVD bandwagon, and they've pretty much got it licked. This DVD sounds phenomenal, retaining the raw energy and excitement of a live gig, but still delivering high-quality audio.
VISION 2.40:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS 5.1
★★★★★

MR & MRS SMITH
Action, cheap gags and gunfire abound – not to mention (shock!) incredible chemistry between Brad and Angelina. Sound and vision both impress, and there are some excellent, if highly implausible, chase scenes to give your system a good going over.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS 5.1
★★★★★

THE FRIGHTENERS
Peter '*Rings*' Jackson used to make cracking low-budget horror flicks. This excellent example features Michael J Fox messing around with ghosts and ghouls. It's underpinned by a tense, dynamic soundtrack with some excellent effects steering.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

TITANIC: DELUXE COLLECTOR'S EDITION (4-DISC)
Test your system (not your patience) by skipping the mushy stuff on disc one and go straight to iceberg-onwards on disc two. A stonking ES 6.1 soundtrack means a huge soundstage with superb attention to detail.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby 5.1 EX, DTS-ES 6.1
★★★★½



A DVD RECORDER THAT'LL HELP ME WATCH ONE CHANNEL WHILE RECORDING ANOTHER

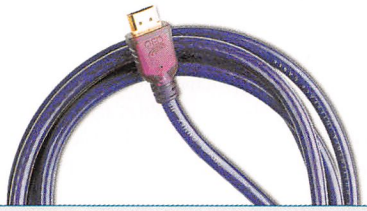
SYSTEM Unspecified television, Thomson digital receiver, VCR

PROBLEM I plan to replace my VCR with a Panasonic DVD recorder. I want to be able to watch one digital channel while I record another. I already have a Thomson digital box, but would my DVD recorder need to have a built-in digital TV tuner as well in order to do this?

SOLUTION Darn these clever readers! You are, of course, entirely correct. In order to watch one digital channel and record another you need two digital tuners. There are a number of set-top boxes that come with twin tuners now, allowing a wide array of crazy viewing/recording combinations, but if you plan to keep your Thomson receiver then we agree that a DVD recorder with a digital tuner is the correct way to go forward.

We have two recommendations for Freeview DVD recorders. Our first choice is Sony's £500 RDR-HXD710. It has a fantastic picture and a 160GB hard disk. A cheaper option is the £260 Panasonic DMR-ES20D, which is good, but has no hard-disk drive.

HDMI connection or, if not, one with a component connection and progressive scan technology. Check out the Toshiba SD-350E for a £99 bargain – though HDMI performance is slightly disappointing. The next most affordable is the superb Denon DVD-1920 at £250. Both will scale your picture, ensuring a best 'fit' video signal for your screen's native resolution. A quality HDMI cable such QED's Qunex HDMI-P (below, £58) is just as essential for a good picture.

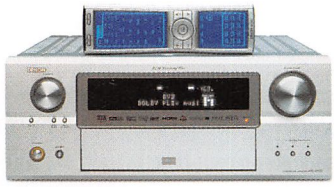


Battle of the demon Denons

SYSTEM Panasonic TH-42PV500 TV, Denon AVC-A11XV amplifier, Denon DVD-A1XV DVD player, Quad L Series speaker system

PROBLEM I'm about to buy the above system, which looks like a belter on paper, but I want to confirm the amplifier is the right partner for the DVD player. How much should I spend on cables and speaker stands?

SOLUTION As you've discovered, there are not one but two ready-made partners available from Denon – the £4000 AVC-A1XV and the £2500 AVC-A11XV amplifiers. The differences? The bigger brother boasts 10 channels of amplification, as opposed to the 'A11XV's meagre seven, and



possesses 170 watts per channel rather than 140. Err... and that's about it. The lower power isn't an issue for your system, so if you 'only' require seven or fewer channels we think you'll be fine with the 'A11XV.

Saving £1500 on the amp gives you no excuse for not buying the highest-quality accessories. In terms of outlay for cables and stands we suggest you allocate at least 10 percent of your total system budget in this department – don't skimp!

IF YOU WANT TO BUY... SPEAKER PACKAGES

DO I NEED BIG SPEAKERS?
Big speakers shift more air than small ones, so work better in large rooms. They sound better with music too. But, more than small ones, large speakers need to be correctly positioned and given the decent room to breathe. If your room is on the small side or very busy, go for compact.

HOW DO INSTALL SPEAKERS?
(1) The front three speakers should be the same height. (2) The tweeters should be at ear-height when you're sitting. (3) The centre speaker should be slightly set back from the left and right.

WHAT ABOUT THE REARS?
For multichannel music, positioning your rear speakers at ear level is desirable – but for the vast majority of us home cinema buffs, a spot of height helps. It gets the rear speakers farther away from your ears, so adding a natural acoustic delay that helps your room to sound bigger.

DO I BUY ALL MY SPEAKERS FROM THE SAME COMPANY?
Ideally, you should do exactly that – we'll allow a little leeway with subwoofers, but with the other speakers in the system, it's vitally important that each speaker adding to the surround sound field has a very similar (and preferably identical) sonic signature. That's the only way to ensure the effects are steered around your room seamlessly. If you already own a pair of stereo speakers, you could buy a additional speakers from the same manufacturer. Otherwise, buy your package – whether big or small – in one hit.

KNOW HOW Setting up your receiver accurately:

A bit of fine-tuning makes the world of difference...

1. SET THE SPEAKER SIZES
Select large or small as reflects the speakers you've got, and adjust the crossover point to the level that corresponds to your speakers – check the manual. If you have access to six speakers in your set-up, ensure you enter in a value for your sixth, centre-rear loudspeaker.

2. WEIGHT EACH SPEAKER
Use a test-tone meter (available for about £30) to accurately 'weight' each speaker. Sit in your listening position, and point the meter straight upwards, not at the speakers. Set the meter so the rotary dial reads 80dB. Select 'C' weighting and 'slow' response. Turn on the test tone built into your receiver, and turn up the volume dial until you get a reading from the left-hand front speaker of 75dB. Trim the tone from each speaker to match that level.

3A. SET THE DELAY IN CENTIMETRES
With a tape measure, ascertain the distance from each speaker to your seat, and enter those figures into the 'delay' adjustment options on your receiver. This ensures the processor in your receiver accurately compensates for the size of your room.

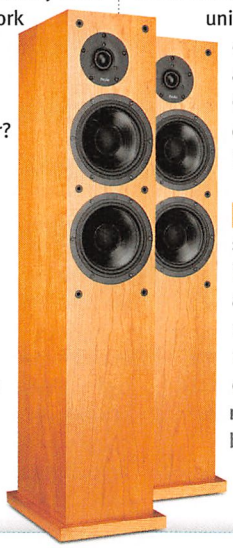
3B. SET THE DELAY IN MILLISECONDS
Alternatively, measure from the front left speaker to your seat, then from the left rear speaker to your seat. You'll have two numbers. For every 30cm of difference between these two figures, add 1ms of delay. For example: 300cm to front speakers, 150cm to rear speakers = 150cm of difference = 5ms of delay.

Q&A Looking for a mid-priced amplifier to complete a system; some small speakers please; radio is letting the side down; amp heaven; and keeping it all supported

Cyrus deserves the best

SYSTEM Cyrus 8vs amp, CD8x CD player, 2 x PSX-R power supply, Cyrus interconnects and speaker cable

PROBLEM I had fully intended to upgrade to a pair of Spendor S5e loudspeakers on the basis of your reviews. Your Awards issue recommends the ProAc Studio 140s, but there are no ProAc dealers in my area. Which do you think will work best with my equipment? Are there any other floor-standing speakers that I should seriously consider?



SOLUTION We always suggest listening to kit before you buy, so you're right to be concerned there's no ProAc dealer nearby. However, when you're spending well over a grand on something you might listen to every day for a decade or more, we think it's worth putting some extra effort in.

If it was us, we'd get on the blower to ProAc and find who are the nearest dealers. We'd then negotiate with them to borrow a pair for a weekend. Do this, and you can listen to the speakers in the comfort of your own home, integrated with your system.

Do the same with Spendors, and you might find that the ProAcs lack the out-and-out refinement of their rivals, though we doubt whether your system is lacking in that regard.

However, you'll also find that the ProAc speakers are great all-rounders and, provided you have sufficient space to allow them to sing, you should be very happy together.

Do I fix my amp or replace it?

SYSTEM Naim NAP110/NAC42 amplifier, Marantz CD player (model unspecified), Epos ES22 speakers

PROBLEM My amp needs some attention, and I was wondering if it's worth servicing, or would a new unit make more sense? I'm considering the Audiolab 8000A or Arcam Alpha 8. Can you suggest any other suitably priced integrated models?

SOLUTION Naim can service all its amps, so that is an option. If you do fancy a change, we're sorry but neither of the amps you mention has been in production for quite a while now, though the Audiolab brand recently made a comeback – we tested the latest 8000CD player last

November and, though impressive, there are better players around.

The equivalent Arcam to the old Alpha 8 is the DiVA A80 (£630). It's a solidly musical, incisive and insightful device, and is well worth auditioning. Alternatively, Cyrus's lean'n'mean 6vs (£650), or the £700 Naim Nait 5 – a spirited performer – are also worth some very serious consideration.

However, if you push your budget just a little further, give Primare's superb £750 I21 (above) a listen.

Some NAD 352 confusion...

PROBLEM Dealers tell me that the NAD C352 and C352CT are the same – but your magazine suggests the C352 is not as good as the CT. Should I consider the Marantz PM7200, even though it was only a Best Buy?

SOLUTION You say 'only a Best Buy'? The Marantz wasn't the 2003 amplifier Product of the Year (the £800 Cyrus 8 was), but the Best Buy Award it received is a hearty recommendation. It was the outstanding amp in the £250-£500 price class.

As for the CT naming confusion: we tested the C352 (pictured right) twice. First, we tested an early example, and didn't like it. When we tested a later, improved version, we were told it was going to be called the C352CT. However, it kept the old name. NAD says the new spec was introduced at serial number H37C35200012. So if the last five digits are 000012 or higher, buy!

The latest music to make your system shine

KATE BUSH
AERIAL

A dozen years may have passed since the last Kate Bush album, but from the opening notes of *King of the Mountain*, it's apparent that time means very little to the Greatest Living British Artist.™ Oddball but universal (choruses include 'washing machine, washing machine' and '3.1415926535...'), musically adept and inventive but never smug, this is the sound of a woman going her own blissful way. Roll on 2017...

★★★★★

MOST TESTING TRACK
Nocturn
Graceful and organic, this is a track that's reminiscent of a microwave oven – it cooks, but there's no discernable heat. Only subtle, articulate and insightful systems will be able to translate the rich, understated pallete of sound into a something wholesome and palatable, while the vocals never fail to surprise.

MADONNA
CONFESSIONS ON A DANCEFLOOR

Madonna doing what she does best – grinding at the disco. Arrangements are dated, but the groove is relentless; an ill-balanced system will be unable to rein in the top-end excitability here.

★★★☆☆

SPARKS
HELLO YOUNG LOVERS

Technology moves on, but it's business as usual in Sparksworld: baroque, wedding-cake arrangements and clever-clever lyrics. Your system needs to focus in double-quick time if this is to make any sense.

★★★★☆

ROBBIE WILLIAMS
INTENSIVE CARE

Glossy, self-conscious pop music with a sophisticated sheen thanks to co-writer Stephen Duffy. Your hi-fi system will requires bags of poise and drive if this collection is to sound its radio-friendly best.

★★★☆☆

AEROSMITH
ROCKIN' THE JOINT

Once outlaw toxic rockers, Aerosmith are now a macrobiotic concern who play at the Hard Rock Hotel in Vegas. This CD/DVD DualDisc demands a wide, regimented soundstage and plenty of crunch.

★★★☆☆

WE'RE HERE TO HELP
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
For hi-fi queries, email
hifianswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

MY SYSTEM RECENTLY ENJOYED ITS SILVER ANNIVERSARY – TIME FOR A CHANGE?

SYSTEM Toshiba SA-320L stereo receiver, Sony GDP-X3001ES CD player, Sony MDS-JE330 MiniDisc player, Technics SL-200 turntable, Celestion Ditton UL8

PROBLEM Everything in my hi-fi system, apart from the MiniDisc deck, is 25 years old. The receiver is on its last legs, so I need a new integrated amp (tuner not required), ideally with switchable speaker outputs and phono stage/headphone socket. I'm told the speakers will be tired by now – should they be replaced too? I'm prepared to consider high-end equipment, but wonder if mid-priced kit would be worth consideration?

SOLUTION We'll recommend a few of what we consider our favourite high-end and midrange amplifiers. Bear in mind, though, that you'll widen your choice greatly if you're prepared to stomach offboard phono and headphone amplification, along with an external speaker switch.

If so, consider Cyrus's £850 8vs for a fast and communicative sound. Myryad's £1000 MXI1280 is an amp of rare dexterity, and for £1500, Primare will sell you its hugely accomplished I30. If your idea of high end outstrips ours, then Graaf's £3950 GM50 is all you'll ever need.

Speakers do deteriorate after many years, and we think you've had your money's worth – your new amp will thrive with some new speakers.

In terms of price-compatibility to the amps we've mentioned, audition Spendor's S3es (£795), Epos's M22s (£950), Acoustic Energy's fantastic AE1 MKIIIs (£2000, below) or, if that money's still burning a hole, Mordaunt-Short's staggeringly good Performance 6s (£3500).

Are my Totems worth the cash?

PROBLEM I want worthy partners for my Naim Nait 2 amp. I listened to it with a year-old pair of Totem Arros, which impressed me enough to pay £540 for. Did I act wisely? And what suitable CD player should I be considering? I can't pay a fortune.

SOLUTION There's no need to pay a fortune for a good CD player nowadays – far from it. From Cambridge Audio's fantastic £250 Azur 640C v2, through to Arcam's excellent £420 DiVA CD73T, and up to Cyrus's Award-winning CD6s (costing £650, which is probably the most we'd spend), there's a fistful of performance that your amplifier is dying to reveal.

There's also no doubt that the Arros are capable speakers – in fact, they cost over a grand when they came out a few years back – and we're sure they will get on perfectly well with your amplifier. The price you pay should reflect their age and condition, so as long as they're in good nick, you haven't been taken for ride.

Most important, though, is how you find the sound – if you're enjoying them, then you've acted wisely. Otherwise, stick 'em on eBay, and audition some sensible alternatives.

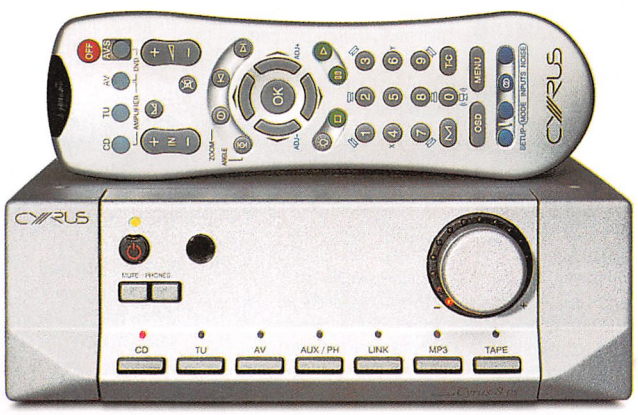
IF YOU WANT TO BUY... STEREO AMPLIFIERS

WHAT IS AN INTEGRATED STEREO AMP?
Hook up a CD player to a pair of speakers and what do you hear? Pardon? Exactly, nothing. An amplifier takes the weak audio signal from a source such as your CD player, and boosts it to level where it's strong enough to power your loudspeakers.

BUT WHAT'S THE 'INTEGRATED' PART ALL ABOUT?
An amp is made of two parts: a preamp controls the volume and selects which source you listen to; the power amp boosts the signal. An integrated amplfier houses both sections together. Separate pre and power amps can work better but cost more.

HOW DO I TEST AN AMPLIFIER?
Hear the product, at home or in the dealer's premises, using a variety of music. Buy one you like the sound of, but don't pay for features you won't use: don't get a phono stage if you haven't got a record player. And ask if the amp is upgradeable – this might save money long-term.

WHY DOESN'T MY AMPLIFIER WORK WITH MY TURNTABLE?
A deck's cartridge emits audio signals at a very low level – much 'quieter' than, say, the signal from a CD player – and, though many older amplifiers have extra phono-specific amplification built in, many of today's machines don't – such as the Award-winning Cyrus 8vs shown on the left. You need to add what's known as a phono stage, starting at £40.

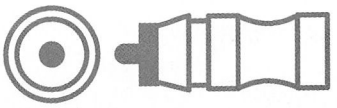


Integrated amps don't have to be big, as this Cyrus shows

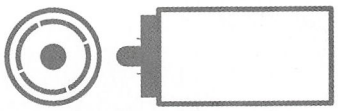
HOW MUCH SHOULD I SPEND ON AN INTEGRATED AMP?
Our BUYER'S GUIDE includes amplifiers starting at £80, for an Acoustic Solutions SP101, and tops out at £9000 for a Tube Technology Synergy PPS. Match the amp with suitable partners – so if creating an amplifier, CD player and stereo speakers set-up, you should split your budget three ways.

KNOW HOW Cables and supports

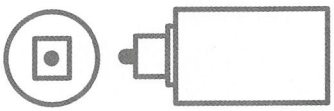
These essential extras are there to boost your system performance



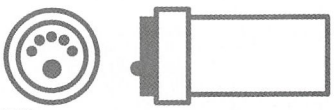
PHONO (RCA)
The standard cable used to connect most hi-fi. Freebie examples often sound bad



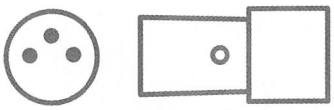
DIGITAL COAXIAL
Superior to RCA, and used to connect a CD player's digital out to a suitable amplifier



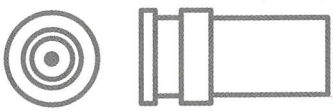
DIGITAL OPTICAL
An alternative to digital coaxial cables, but in most cases not quite as good as them



DIN
These are an old-fashioned alternative to phono sockets, found on some high-end kit



XLR
A specialist connector (sometimes called 'balanced') for high-end and pro audio kit



BNC
This locking connector is also usually only found on high-end hi-fi equipment

NOW ADD THESE

MAINS CABLES
Get a cleaner signal to your kit with a mains-lead upgrade. It's not black magic, they really work. £45+

SPEAKER STANDS
These position your speakers at the correct height, and keep them firmly located, so all the maximum amount of energy is used to make music. £30+

EQUIPMENT RACKS
These prevent unwanted interference and vibration from interfering with your sensitive electronics. £30+

ISOLATION PLATFORMS
These perform a similar job to an equipment rack. £30+

Q&A Keeping the music flowing using iTunes; ripping vinyl to your computer; album art; movies on your PSP?

It's in the mix

PROBLEM Help! I'm just getting started with the online digital music market and am struggling with a particular problem with my dance CDs. I have lots of mix albums (Renaissance, Ministry of Sound, etc), and when I burn a mix CD from iTunes on to CD, there's always a slight silence between tracks, disrupting the continuous flow of music. I want to sort out this annoying problem before Santa brings my iPod.

SOLUTION You can fix this problem to a great extent by changing the options in iTunes' Preferences. Select the 'Burning' option, and adjust the time gap between songs to zero. Pick your preferred setting, insert your dance disc and burn, baby, burn. However, there'll still be a slight hiccup between tracks, which even iTunes 6 can't get rid of. Pity!

Subs hotline is 08456 777813

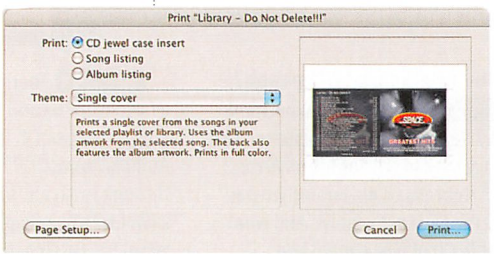
PROBLEM I have no difficulty at all importing CDs into iTunes, but I can't find a way to import my vinyl. I don't buy your mag every month, so maybe I missed an article on this subject.

SOLUTION Ah yes, the importance – and incredible value, of course – of a WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION subscription once again rears its lovely head. In our September edition we answered an identical query: however, we're always happy to oblige. What you need is Creator's 7.5 Sound Editor software, a phono amp, a pair of inter-connects, and a decent-quality – we use cards from Creative – sound card. To hear your valued vinyl at its best, record the files as 16-bit 44kHz stereo WAVs, not as MP3s, which sound inferior.

Do you get the picture?

PROBLEM I'm buying more and more iTunes music, but I miss owning the album covers, plus information such as song order. Is there a website that can give me this type of data?

SOLUTION Cheer up, sir – if you buy music from iTunes you can also download the album art from iTunes. Fire up your 'puter, open iTunes, and from the 'file' dropdown box, select 'print'. Hey Presto, you've got a selection of artwork printing options. You can also download album covers by opening Google Images, and searching, say, 'Robbie Williams CD'. You'll find images aplenty on the internet.



It's in the mix

PROBLEM I love my new PSP, but I have a large collection of DVDs I can't watch on it. How easy is it to convert them to the right format?

SOLUTION Ripping DVDs is fraught with problems. Even making legal back-ups for your own use is very tricky – it's certainly not as easy as copying a CD. The process uses heaps of processing power – in fact, it induces lesser computers to overheat and abandon the process. It also takes many hours, if not days. If you really are looking for a new hobby, then get on the internet and search for software such as Gordian Knot or AutoGK. You'll find tutorials aplenty.

What's simpler is converting ready-ripped files to the correct resolution and file type (MP4) for the PSP. Software such as RaPIZ Video Converter and Video 9 will convert XDiv and DivX files into the right format, so you can watch these films on the move using your PSP device.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY... VIDEO JUKEBOXES

Archos's AV700 has 40GB of space for video and audio, plus a 7in screen

HOW DOES A VIDEO JUKEBOX WORK?
Video jukeboxes will play video and audio stored on their built-in hard disk. They use LCD screens for playback, USB connection for file transfers, and audio and TV-out connections to transfer film and video

WHAT WILL I LOVE?
That you can record your favourite TV shows (either by plugging the portable into your TV, or via a PC with a TV tuner) and take them with you anywhere, along with your MP3 music files, too. A TV-out socket allows for big-screen playback

WHAT WILL I HATE?
Don't be thinking these products are completely pocket-sized. Most of the best players are more suited to a clown's pocket than yours or ours – unless you're a clown. But don't worry, they're still portable, and they're still shrinking

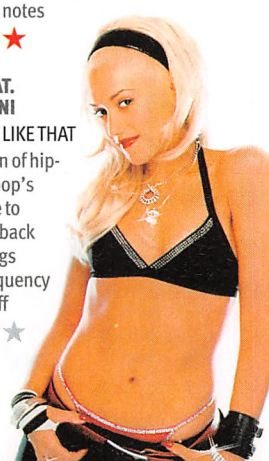
WHAT ELSE SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?
Connectivity, compatibility, battery life and storage capacity: the predictable portable checklist, but with a video twist here. Also check the software, operating system used, and whether it's wi-fi enabled

RIP THESE

BLACK
IF YOU'RE ALL DONE DYING
From Mr *Wonderful Life*, this tune delivers Black's typically impressive production, and tests vocal realism
★★★★★

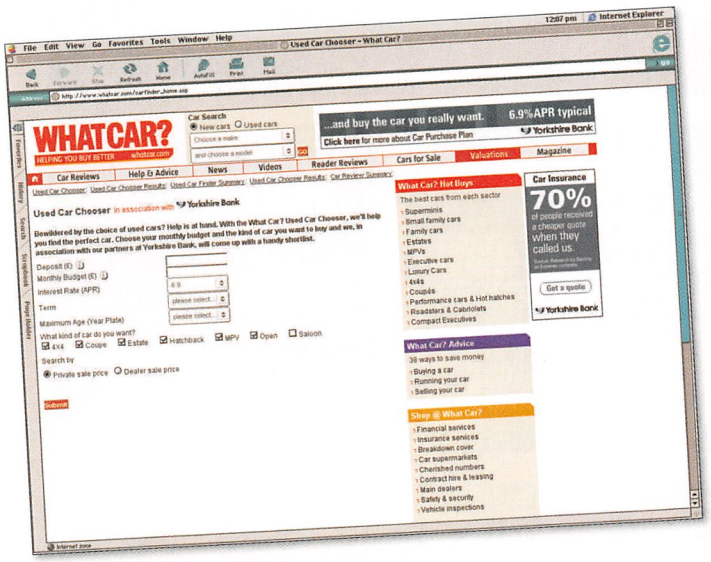
EURYTHMICS
SWEET DREAMS (ARE MADE OF THIS)
Annie and Dave have 'another' collection out, and this classic tune includes plenty of headphone-busting, bass notes
★★★★★

PHARREL FEAT. GWEN STEFANI
CAN I HAVE IT LIKE THAT
The statesman of hip-hop recruits pop's queen of style to deliver a laid-back test of all things below the frequency range's midriff
★★★★☆



WE'RE HERE TO HELP
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
For MP3 queries email
mp3answers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

LOOKING FOR YOUR PERFECT USED CAR?



WHATCAR?

USED CAR CHOOSER

IN ASSOCIATION WITH Yorkshire Bank

Bewildered by the choice of used cars? Don't despair: with the What Car? Used Car Chooser, we'll help you find the perfect car. Let us know what kind of car you want, plus your monthly budget and we will come up with a handy shortlist. Buy What Car? magazine every month for a variety of examples, or log onto **whatcar.com/carchooser** for the full service.

WHATCAR?

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Bewildered by the choice of used cars? Don't despair. With the What Car? Used Car Chooser, we'll help you find the perfect car. Let us know what kind of car you want, plus your monthly budget and we, with our partners at Yorkshire Bank, will come up with a handy shortlist of finance packages to suit. Here, we've shown you just a handful of examples for every budget but, for the full service, log on to: **whatcar.com/carchooser**

MONTHLY BUDGET UP TO £200

FIAT Punto 1.2 60bhp Dynamic 5dr — £4545

'03/03, 20k miles, £4545, Supermini

Deposit £500 **Monthly budget** £179 x 24 **Balloon payment** Nil

For around half the cost of the equivalent brand new Punto, you're getting a model that looks as good as new. More than that, the Punto is a spacious and practical supermini, capable of an average fuel consumption of 45mpg with this 1.2-litre petrol engine and equally talented both around town and on the motorway. Don't be worried that it will be unreliable, either – in fact, the Punto is very well built and mechanically sturdy.

TOYOTA Avensis 2.0 D-4D T2 5dr — £11,245

'03/03, 26k miles,£11,245, Family car

Deposit £1125 **Monthly budget** £197 x 36 **Balloon payment** £4500

In the latest Avensis, you have everything that's great about Toyotas – fine build, excellent reliability and so on – plus a lot of the things you might not expect of a Toyota family car: a degree of style and an enjoyable drive, for example. Above all, it's an extremely practical car, with acres of space inside and plenty of equipment.

MONTHLY BUDGET £201-£250

HONDA Jazz 1.4 i-DSI SE — £6345

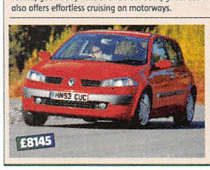
'02/51, 39k miles, £6345, Supermini

Deposit £1270 **Monthly budget** £225 x 24 **Balloon payment** Nil

If you're looking for a good buy, nothing has better credentials than the Honda Jazz. Twice the overall winner in the annual JD Power customer satisfaction survey, it's the cleverest 'mini out there. The packaging, in particular, is superb, with enormous space inside and a decent boot.

However, it's the flexibility of the rear seats that makes it such a great small car – they either fold flat to create a long deck or their cushions tip backwards, leaving a floor-to-ceiling space big enough for two bikes, if their front wheels are removed. Not bad for a supermini.

On top of that, Jazz buyers get good equipment levels, fine build quality, strong residual values, good body control and near-50mpg fuel economy from the 1.4 petrol engine, which also offers effortless cruising an motorways.



RENAULT Mégane 1.6 Dynamique 5dr — £8145

'03/53, 20k miles, £8145, Small family car

Deposit £815 **Monthly budget** £209 x 24 **Balloon payment** £3000

If you don't mind sacrificing some space for a fair amount of style, the latest Mégane almost certainly talks your language. The 1.6-litre engine gives decent performance, while excellent safety kit helped the car to full marks in Euro NCAP crash tests. Quality is up with the very best in the class, and Dynamique trim brings all the equipment you could want. Only the Mégane's relatively tight space in the rear counts against it.

FORD Focus C-Max 2.0 TDCi Zetec — £11,795

'04/54, 8k miles, £11,795, MPV

Deposit £1180 **Monthly budget** £225 x 36 **Balloon payment** £4000

The Focus C-Max has one thing all used car buyers should look out for: a Ford badge. Thanks to that, and the relatively high numbers of Fords sold, depreciation hits them hard – so they look great value as used cars. The C-Max is a spacious and practical compact MPV, at its best with the fine TDCi diesel engine. What's more, it drives superbly.

MONTHLY BUDGET £251-£300

SUBARU Impreza WRX STi 4dr

'03/53, 20k miles, £16,145, Performance car

Deposit £1615 **Monthly budget** £285 x 60 **Balloon payment** Nil

Both on the road and in the World Rally Championship, the turbocharged Subaru Impreza is rightly a legend, and the STi takes all the good bits on a stage further. Compared with the standard WRX model, the STi is faster, sharper and an even more exciting drive. True, the running costs are high, but at least you still have all the practicality of a basic Impreza, meaning this rally replica can double as a practical family car.

TOYOTA Landcruiser Colorado D-4D GX — £18,495

'02/52, 32k miles, £18,495, 4x4

Deposit £3700 **Monthly budget** £290 x 60 **Balloon payment** Nil

Some so-called off-roaders look as if they'd flinch at the sight of a spot of mud, but the Colorado is happy to get axle-deep in the stuff. It's tough and reliable, and has a healthy dose of practicality, too. To cap it all, whatever you want to do, the flexible and strong diesel powerplant will do it without breaking into a sweat.

MONTHLY BUDGET £301-£350

BMW 323Ci coupé — £12,395

'00/W, 54k miles, £12,395, Coupé

Deposit £2500 **Monthly budget** £303 x 36 **Balloon payment** Nil

If there was such a thing as a Car-lover's Dictionary, the definition of desirability would probably be the 3 Series coupé. It's got the right badge, of course, but there's also a class-leading blend of ride and handling, excellent build and residual values plus classy looks, while under the bonnet is one of world's smoothest six-cylinder engines.

VW Golf GT PD TDi 150bhp 5dr — £14,395

'03/53, 20k miles, £14,395, Hot hatch

Deposit £1440 **Monthly budget** £305 x 24 months **Balloon payment** £7000

Yes, that's right: a diesel hot hatch – and it's not the contradiction in terms you might expect. In fact, the combination of huge mid-range pulling power (which gives easy, but strong, performance) and 50mpg economy makes this the pick of the various hot Golfs of this age. You also get fine build quality, good comfort and strong residual values.

LEXUS LS430 — £24,295

'00/X, 50k miles, £24,295, Luxury car

Deposit £4860 **Monthly budget** £344 x 48 **Balloon payment** £6500

The LS430 is considerably dearer than the LS400 it replaced but, with prices for the earliest cars now dipping below £25,000, it's looking more affordable. Performance, comfort and refinement are up with the very best, and if that's not enough, Lexus has been top make in the JD Power owner satisfaction report for five years in a row.

MONTHLY BUDGET £350+

SAAB 9-5 estate 2.0t Arc auto — £13,995

'03/03, 26k miles, £13,995, Estate car

Deposit £1400 **Monthly budget** £386 x 36 **Balloon payment** Nil

When it was launched, the Saab 9-5 estate was *What Car?*'s Estate of the Year, and the qualities which won it that award still shine through now. For a start, it has a big load area, with a 60/40 split rear seat, plus space and comfort for passengers in equal measure. On top of that, the drive also focuses on comfort – which is no bad thing in an estate – while the engine gives fine performance and the standard equipment list is lengthy.

JAGUAR X-type 2.0D Sport 4dr — £15,795

'03/03, 26k miles, £15,795, Compact exec

Deposit £3160 **Monthly budget** £387 x 36 **Balloon payment** Nil

It has taken a while, but used values for diesel-engined versions of the Jaguar X-type are now reaching more sensible levels. Nevertheless, this still looks like a bargain next to the German models that dominate this class. However, it's not just about money: the X-type also has distinctive looks, a fine drive and, with this turbodiesel engine, good fuel economy. Buying an example at this age means the car will even have the benefit of some of the new-car warranty remaining.

MERCEDES E320 CDI Elegance — £17,295

'01/X, 47k miles, £17,295, Estate car

Deposit £3460 **Monthly budget** £424 x 36 **Balloon payment** Nil

Some prestige-badged estates give just the merest nod to practicality. The E-Class estate, on the contrary, has a huge boot, and it looks after its passengers with generous accommodation, a comfortable ride and excellent refinement. This version, with its strong diesel engine, may not come cheap, but it's worth every penny.

BMW X5 3.0d SE — £26,295

'01/51, 42k miles, £26,295, 4x4

Deposit £2630 **Monthly budget** £417 x 48 **Balloon payment** £8000

Still hugely desirable, the X5 continues to command high prices, but there are good reasons for that. It has all the prestige of a BMW badge, and plenty of talent to back that up. The way it drives on-road, for example, remains a benchmark for modern 4x4s and the diesel engine gives a fine blend of performance and economy. Practicality, too, is excellent, with enough room on board for a family and its luggage.

whatcar.com/carchooser

Sound Advice

MP3 HI-FI HOME CINEMA TVs & PROJECTORS

Reader Rescue

HELP! Rob has big ideas for his home music network, but nothing beats trying kit out...

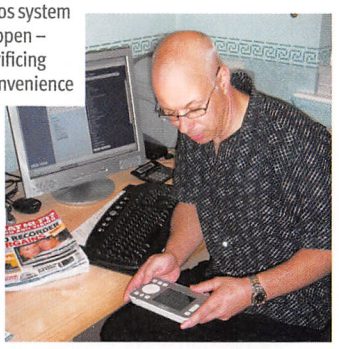
Multiroom wireless workout

SYSTEM JVC MX-D4T midi system in the living room; Aiwa NSX AV70 midi system in upstairs music room; Apple iPod; PC; wireless network

PROBLEM The advent of digital music has certainly caught Rob's imagination. A new PC and an iPod are his music 'hubs', but currently it's a case of plugging his 'Pod into two ancient midi systems located around the house... we're ready to banish the past, and show him the future!

SOLUTION We've taken an almighty stack of kit for this one: there's a superb budget hi-fi system for upstairs, the top-performing iPod dock, as well as – not one – but two wireless, multiroom solutions...

TWO UP, TWO DOWN Transporting music around the whole house is Rob's desire, and the Sonos system makes it happen – without sacrificing quality or convenience



THERE'S SOMETHING IN the air... yes, it's your music beaming round your house. Even the least techie of readers will have noticed the words 'MP3' and 'wireless' cropping up in our mag more often nowadays.

This month's *Rescuee*, Rob from Milton Keynes, is aware there are possibilites afforded by the emergence of digital music, but – like many – he isn't sure which route to take for his dream home system.

"The Sonos system is convenient and easy to use... I want one!"

"Currently, my iPod and two creaking midi systems are doing all the work. But with a computer packed full of tunes and a wireless network already in place, I know there's a better way..." He's right!

First, we address downstairs. We've brought along the Monitor Audio i-Deck to demonstrate the sonic ability available if Rob wants to use his iPod as a source. Once we've dug out the right iPod adapter, Rob is impressed by the the sound quality: "Detail and clarity are much improved over that old midi system, while the superior styling and space-saving are obvious improvements, too."

Next up is the Philips WACS700, a pair of micro systems that are connected wirelessly. The larger micro has CD player, 40GB hard disk, tuner, amp, flat-panel speakers and subwoofer – all in one tidy package. Your £600 also buys you a smaller micro system that also has built-in speakers, and the ability to receive music from the main system. Extra units can also be added (£200 a pop), each wirelessly streaming music from the main source.

"The Philips is a decent listen, very easy to use, and I like the multiroom tricks." Yet we can see Rob's gaze has already fallen on our trump card, the Sonos system.

The first Sonos box connects straight to your computer or to your network via the router. A second unit, anywhere in the house, is fed music wirelessly from the same source. You can add extra units to this modular system for £380 each, with the basic package costing £950.

Add speakers for some action

And we haven't even mentioned the chunky, ultra-cool, hand-held controller – which Rob grips with fervour of the committed – on which your music library appears.

Each Sonos unit has a built-in amp, so we add Wharfedale's £180 Diamond 9.1s to start the party. Rob's sold on the sound, which compares well to some Cambridge Audio hi-fi separates we've brought along for comparison. Rob's final words: "Convenient and a real joy to use... where can I get one?"

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Do you have a hi-fi or home cinema headache we can soothe? We'd love to help with any sound or vision-related conundrum. Contact us at:

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington TW11 0JE
Email joe.cox@haynet.com

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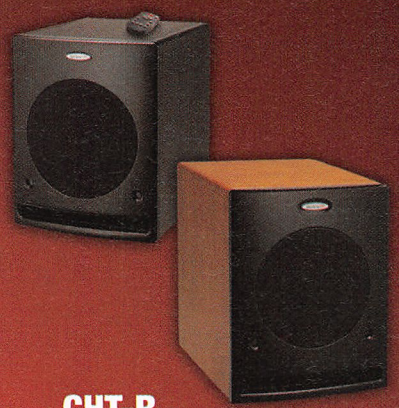

CHT-R
Velodyne's entry level range of subwoofers, now with full remote and 4 listening mode presets to complement both music and film.
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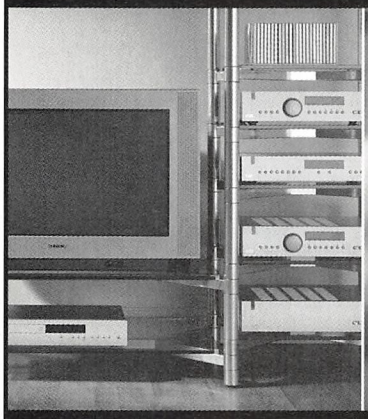
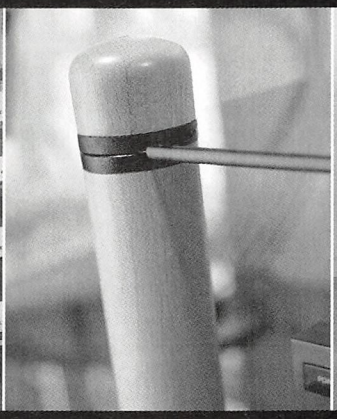


Aria Modular

The flexible Audio visual system. Build up individual vertical shelving units or link units for continuous side-by-side TV & Hi-Fi housing. A range of ten colours available.

More details please ☐ AM



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More details please ☐ RW

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More details please ☐ SS

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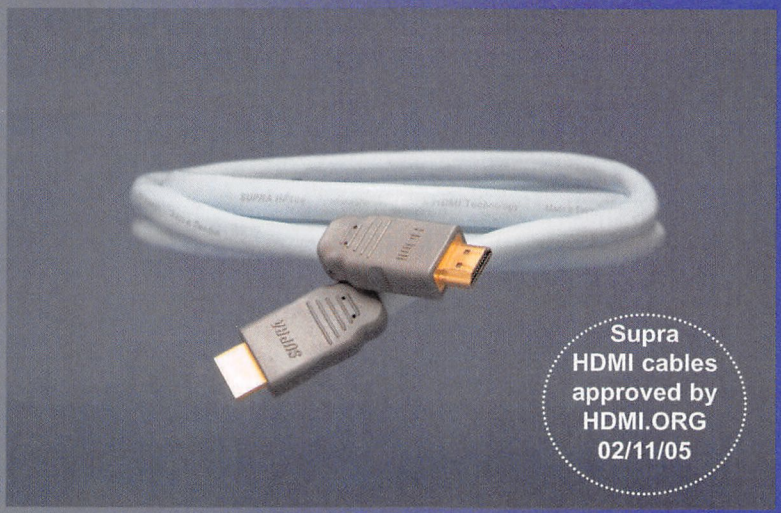

NEW PRODUCT:
Supra HF100 cable has been specially designed to carry DVI and HDMI digital signals over long runs at high resolution. Available in various different factory terminated lengths from 1m to 20m and ideal for use with the new generation of High Definition projectors and plasma screens.

Now available are Supra's own HDMI-approved factory terminated HDMI and DVI cables - fitted with gold-plated connectors and capable of running at up to 1080 i - even over a long length, such 12m or 15m - ideal for projectors.

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We are a licensed HDMI Adoptor manufacturer

Supra Cables are available from all good hi-fi and home cinema stores in 38 countries around the world.

HDMI HIGH-DEFINITION MULTIMEDIA INTERFACE
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For UK customers who require more details or to request a brochure pack containing stockists & price information, please contact:
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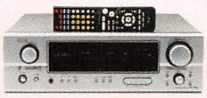
Our A to Z to the perfect system

System Builder

TVs & PROJECTORS | HOME CINEMA | HI-FI | MP3

SCREENS SORTED

Is LCD, plasma or CRT television the way forward? Or is a projector your ideal display? We've got all the answers here. Just turn to page 1.2



HOME CINEMA

Get more from your DVDs and make the most of your TV with a fantastic surround sound system. We show you how easy it is on page 1.4

HI-FI SYSTEMS

Transform the way you listen to music with a proper hi-fi system – you won't believe just how great your music collection will soon sound. See page 1.5

MP3 MADE EASY

Everything you'll need to know about portable music players: which music and photo files they play; how many tracks they store. All the answers on page 1.8

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System Builder

HOME CINEMA HI-FI MP3

TVs & Projectors

KNOW HOW Flat TVs are all the rage nowadays, and not surprisingly: they offer great picture quality, bags of style and convenience. And just watch those prices drop...

HIGH RESOLUTION
Many cheaper flatscreen televisions are hampered by a low level of resolution. This can be fine with normal TV signals, but won't allow you to display High Definition TV in the future. If you're planning to buy, consider a set with higher resolution figures: see below for more details

DIGITAL TV BUILT-IN
Many modern sets offer the convenience of a Freeview tuner, which gives you access to many more channels of television than standard analogue broadcasting. You can also access some digital radio stations this way

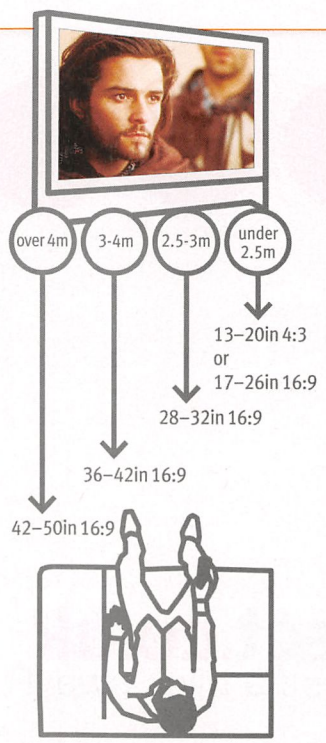
FLOORSTANDING TV PLINTH
Sometimes you can buy matching TV supports to house several items of kit. They frequently look great, but bear in mind that you seldom get them as part of the purchase price. The same applies to wall brackets and even, in some cases, simple table-top stands

Buy the right screen size for your room

Your mum was right: if you sit too close to a screen that's too large, you'll strain your eyes in next to no time. Equally, a TV that's too far away won't convey the proper impact and cinema feel. Follow our chart on the right to find out the ideal size for your screen.

Go for built-in Freeview for loads more channels

You can easily add an external digibox to any new TV, but it makes sense to get one with a Freeview tuner included. It's not just neater and more convenient: it also delivers a better picture, because it simplifies the connection path between the tuner and the screen itself.



Get a High-Def ready set

High Definition TV launches in 2006, courtesy of Sky. You might not want to go for it immediately, but it makes sense to buy a TV that handles the new system, just in case. You can't change your mind later: all you'll be able to do is buy a new TV! We use the internationally recognised 'HD Ready' tag to identify every High Definition-ready TV we review: look for it in the mag, and when you're shopping.

What features do I need?

Bear in mind that some plasma TVs are only displays – they don't have sound or a tuner built-in, because they're sold for use in business environments or to home-cinema enthusiasts. Buy the television set that can cope with all your needs.

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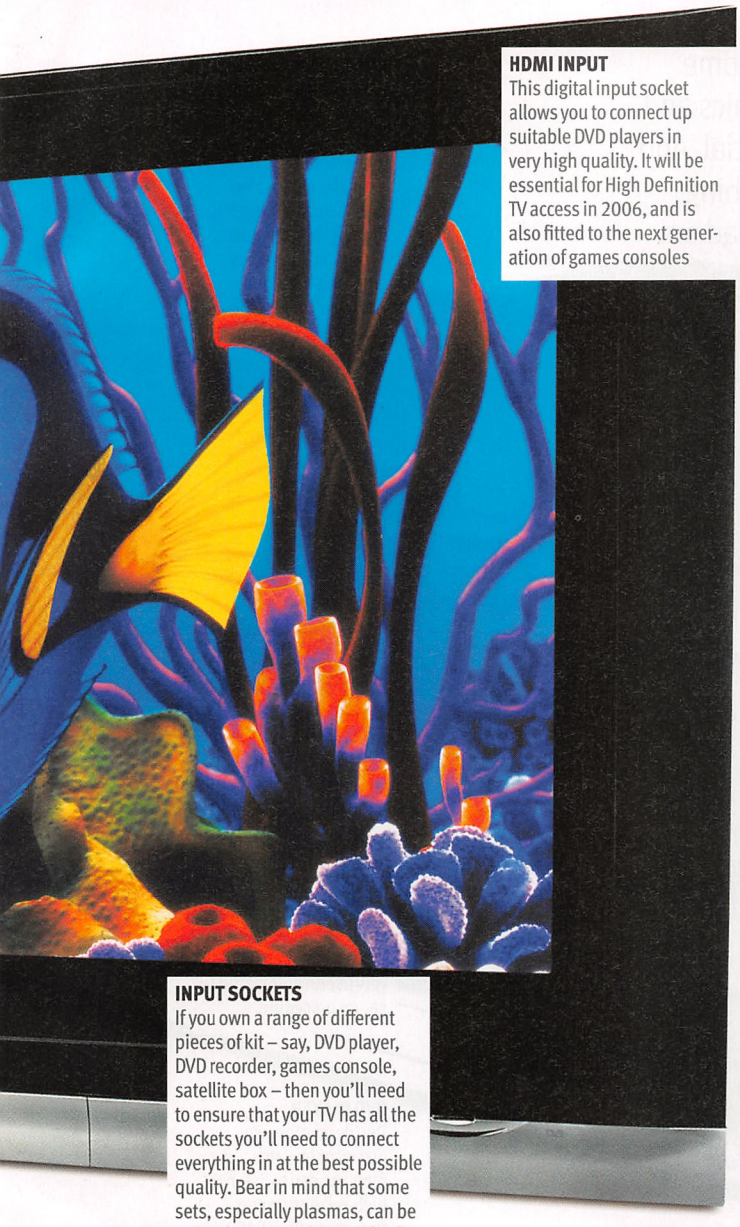


HDMI INPUT
This digital input socket allows you to connect up suitable DVD players in very high quality. It will be essential for High Definition TV access in 2006, and is also fitted to the next generation of games consoles

INPUT SOCKETS
If you own a range of different pieces of kit – say, DVD player, DVD recorder, games console, satellite box – then you'll need to ensure that your TV has all the sockets you'll need to connect everything in at the best possible quality. Bear in mind that some sets, especially plasmas, can be quite short on socketry – check!

BUY RIGHT TVs

Calculate your ideal TV size, position it correctly and boost its performance

Work out the right size of screen for your room...

- 13–20in 4:3 or 17–26in 16:9
- 28–32in 16:9
- 36–42in 16:9
- 42–50in 16:9

Alternatively, refer to our screen-size calculator on the left-hand page below

Have you got a Freeview box or satellite already?

If not, then check if your new TV already has digital built-in.

- Yes
- No

Do you want a set that'll work with High-Def TV?

These broadcasts begin later this year or early next.

- Yes
- No

How many devices do I need to plug into it?

Work out the number of devices that plug into your TV today – then decide if your new televsion set will have all the sockets you need to handle them with a few to spare:

- Digital video (HDMI or DVI)
- Component inputs
- Scarts
- Others

Does it come with a stand?

Or is it a flatscreen TV that's designed to be wall-mounted?

- Yes
- No
- Wall-mounted

MUST HAVES Flatscreens

Four super sets for you

PANASONIC TX26LXD500
£1600
- 26in screen suitable up to 2.5m
- Built-in digital TV
- HD-ready
- Plenty of sockets, including HDMI
- Stand included in price

SONY KDE-P37XS1
£3400
- 37in screen suitable up to 3.5m away
- Analogue tuner
- HD-ready
- Loads of sockets, including component
- It's a 2004 Award-winner

HITACHI 42PD5200
£3000
- 42in for viewing from up to 4m
- Analogue TV tuner
- HD-ready
- DVI-D socket for great pictures
- Super image from a Fujitsu panel

PIONEER PDP-504XDE
£4000
- 50in for viewing over 4m
- Built-in digital TV
- HD-ready
- Every socket you need

BUYER'S GUIDE £

And lastly, check it fared well in our tests! Find top TVs in our *Buyer's Guide*, starting on page 115

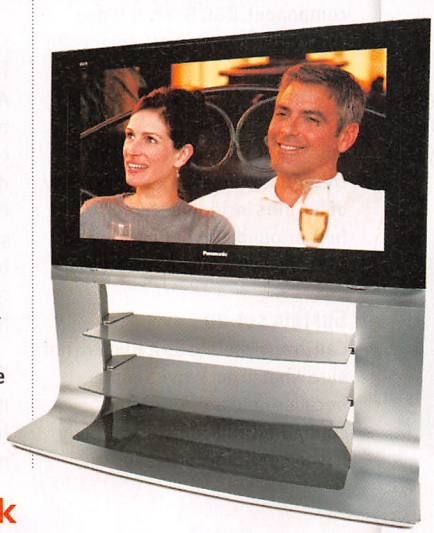
FAQs

What sockets do I need?

Look for several Scart sockets, at least one component video input and, if possible, a digital video input, either DVI-D or HDMI. This last feature isn't essential in smaller screen sets, but we don't buy a larger TV without one.

Does it come with a stand?

This is a potential pitfall for many buyers, whether they're shopping for flat or conventional TVs. Often, manufacturers quote prices for the set itself, without its stand (even if that's shown in the pictures). These can be quite expensive, particularly larger designs like the stand below (£500). Wall-brackets also cost you extra, and you need to mindful that some big plasmas can weigh quite a lot.



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System Builder

TVs & PROJECTORS | HI-FI | MP3

Home Cinema

KNOW HOW Your choice of home cinema electronics and speakers is crucial. And fortunately choice is one thing you've got loads of... so read on!

SPEAKER PACKAGE
There's a straight choice here between performance and domestic acceptability. Go for a smaller subwoofer/satellite combo and it'll fit easily into the home. But it won't sound as good as a full-sized package. You pay the money and choose...

MULTICHANNEL AMPLIFIER
Even budget designs should include all the essentials. Any amplifier you buy should come with the full suite of movie soundtrack decoding and processing modes. Many mid-priced contenders even have a very useful automated set-up procedure.

DVD PLAYER
Decide whether you just want to watch films or need to listen to high-resolution music formats such as SACD and DVD-Audio as well

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Movies or music

Decide where your priorities are. Is film performance paramount or do you listen to more music? Musical multichannel equipment is rare and tends to cost a lot more.

Connecting to a display

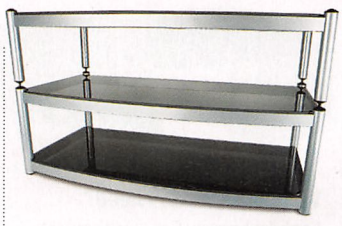
If your display can accept a digital video input such as HDMI or DVI then we suggest buying a player that can output such a signal. These can be bought for as little as £150. If your display device doesn't have such an input, the analogue connection hierarchy is as follows: component, RGB Scart, S-Video and finally (if you must), composite.

Higher resolution surround music formats

You've got a choice of SACD and DVD-Audio. These come in a variety of flavours including stereo and full surround. Choose a universal DVD player if you're interested.

System set-up

Call in an expert to do it if you're not sure what to do. Why? Simple: because unless the system is configured and adjusted properly it won't perform optimally.



Housing the electronics?

A home cinema amp generates heat, so ensure that there's plenty of airflow around it – whatever you do, don't plonk your DVD player on top of it. Magazines might photograph kit like this, but don't try it at home. Get a dedicated equipment rack, or buy a TV with a stand that has room for all your components.

Cables

It's a false economy to save money here. Buy decent cables, or you'll never get the best sound or vision.

SUBWOOFERS
While all amplifiers give you the choice to omit the subwoofer, we wouldn't have a surround system without one. These add a degree of scale and authority that is almost impossible to achieve any other way.

BUY RIGHT Get in gear for movies

Don't be tempted by cinema kit until you know it's exactly right for you

What type of system?
- One-box
- Separates

Does your display have a digital video input?
- Yes
- No

Are you interested in high-resolution music formats?
- Yes
- No

What you do you want your DVD system to do?
- Playback only
- Play and record

Which recording formats do you want?
- Hard-disk drive (HDD)
- Recordable DVD (look for multi-format designs)
- HDD/DVD combined

Will the components fit in the intended rack?
- Yes
- No

Is there enough ventilation?
- Yes
- No

Speaker type
- Sub/sat package
- Full-size
- Silver or colour finish
- Wood finish

Where do the surrounds need to be put in the room?
- Wall
- Stand
- Floor

Does the package include a subwoofer?
- Yes
- No

BUYER'S GUIDE £

Check it fared well in our tests! Find the pick of home cinema in our *Buyer's Guide*, p115

MUST HAVES Cinema

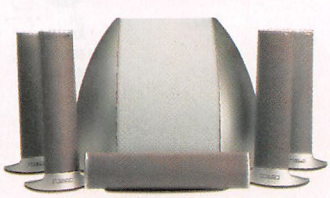
Some great selections

DVD PLAYER
PANASONIC DVD-S97
£150
- Includes HDMI socket for superior picture quality with suitable displays
- Component video
- Scart
- Plays DVD-A discs as well as DVD-Video, CD, MP3, DVD-R/RW, DVD-RAM

DVD RECORDER
SONY RDR-GXD500
£400
- Records onto multiple DVD formats
- Amazing-quality digital recordings
- Includes a Freeview digital tuner
- Incredible price deals available

HOME CINEMA IN A BOX
YAMAHA DVX-S200
£450
- Packed with features, including SACD playback
- DVD player, amp, speakers and subwoofer included
- Progressive scan picture quality
- 85 watts per channel sound

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
SONY STR-DB795
£300
- Fantastic-quality home cinema receiver
- Seven channels of 100w amplification
- All major Dolby and DTS modes
- Discounts available



SPEAKER PACKAGE
MISSION FS1-AV
£500
- Four satellites, with dedicated centre speaker and a 100w active subwoofer
- NXT certification

FAQs

General speaker positioning

The front three speakers need to go in line with the screen to lock the sound onto the picture. Ideally, the sub should go with these, though bass' less directional nature means it's not as critical as it is with other speakers. The surrounds usually go behind you, and should be angled to produce a cohesive and seamless sound field with the rest of the equipment.

Positioning the centre

Don't be tempted to put the centre speaker on top of the TV cabinet. This isn't the best place for it and can spoil the sound noticeably, because TV cabinets are usually made of thin plastic and resonate strongly. Try to put the centre on a dedicated support if possible.

Subwoofer set-up

Most people set the subwoofer too high. If you can identify the subwoofer's output as a separate entity from the rest of the speaker package, then the set-up isn't right. Use a piece of music with a steady bassline to adjust the sub's settings. Set it up so that the complete frequency range sounds as even and seamless as possible.

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System Builder

TVs & PROJECTORS MP3 HOME CINEMA

Hi-Fi

KNOW HOW Make more of your music with a stereo system that will do your favourite tunes justice. Here's what to look for...

REMOTE CONTROL
It might seem strange in this day and age, but many stereo amplifiers still come without remote controls. It means you'll keep fit getting up and down to adjust the volume, but is otherwise irritating. Check before you buy

AMPLIFIER
Ensure this has enough inputs to cover all the sources you have (radio, turntable etc), and adequate power to go loud enough for you

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Can I use a record player?

If you have a record player the simplest way to hear it is with an amplifier with a built-in phono stage. This circuit amplifies and equalises the signal from the deck to a point where the main amp sections can make full use of it. Don't worry though, there are outboard units available if the amplifier you like doesn't include such a feature, starting at £40.

How can I tell how loud the system will sound?

Paper specs can only tell you so much. Oddly, amplifier power isn't the main indicator of how loud your system will go. Speaker sensitivity is more important, as each extra 3dB is equivalent to a doubling of amp power: so the combination of a 90dB speaker with a 50-watt amplifier will be as loud as an 87dB speaker with a 100-watt amp.

What if you want to use two pairs of speakers?

Some amps have two sets of speaker outputs. Don't use both pairs at once at high volume as the amp isn't designed to do this for long periods. Sound suffers in this configuration, too – but it's still a feature you can use occasionally.

Equipment racks

Bookshelves, cupboards or sideboards might be more convenient, but these don't yield the best results and could cause the products to over-heat due to inadequate ventilation. Spend at least £200 on a rack.

Speaker positioning

Before you buy a pair of speakers decide where you'd like to put

SPEAKERS
As a general guide: small speakers go in small rooms and big speakers perform best in larger spaces. While not a hard and fast rule you won't go far wrong using it

CD PLAYER
Most machines will now play home recorded CDs without a problem, but some still have issues when asked to replay MP3 files burnt onto a disc. If this is important to you check that the machine will replay MP3 discs before you buy

AMPLIFIER-FEATURES
Features such as tone controls, headphone outputs and speaker switching are relatively uncommon with quality separates, so decide whether these are important to you and pick the product accordingly

FAQs

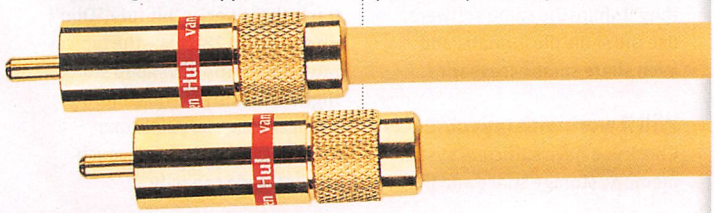
them. Many speakers are designed to work best well away from all walls, which usually means at least a metre or so away from any room boundaries. Get it wrong and the bass will be overblown and boomy.

Speaker stands

The tweeter – the smallest drive unit you'll see on any speaker – should be at ear height when you listen. This give the best-balanced sound. Smaller speakers need to sit on stands to raise them to the correct height and support them solidly. Don't skimp here because the speakers will never reveal their true potential if you compromise. Spend around 25 percent of your speaker's price on stands.

Getting connected

Don't use the basic cables that come with equipment. These are usually of extremely poor quality and will limited overall performance. Good aftermarket leads will make all the difference. Don't be tempted to skimp. Set aside 15 percent of your budget for cables.



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BUY RIGHT Hi-fi checklist

All the essential questions to ask before picking kit

Can the CD player read MP3-format discs?
- Yes
- No

Does the amplifier have enough inputs?
- Yes
- No

Does it have a phono stage?
- Yes
- No

Does it have the right features?
- Tone controls
- Headphone sockets
- Remote control
- Switching speaker outputs

Speaker choice
- Large
- Small

Will they need stands?
- Yes
- No

Speaker position
- Free space
- Wall

Can you receive DAB (digital radio) signals?
- Yes – if in doubt, check *www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio/listen/postcode.shtml*
- With the aid of a rooftop aerial
- No (FM still sounds great!)

What does the turntable's price include?
- Deck only
- Tonearm
- Cartridge

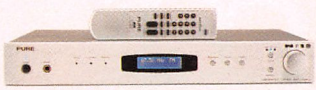
BUYER'S GUIDE £

Lastly, check it fared well in our tests. See the hi-fi section of our *Buyer's Guide*, from p115

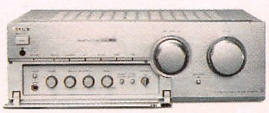
MUST HAVES System separates

Hi-fi heroes

CD PLAYER
NAD C521BEE
£200
- Open and involving sound quality
- Best Buy Award when it came out
- Remote control
- Big discounts available
- Choice of two finishes



DAB/FM TUNER
PURE DRX-702ES
£330
- Access all the latest digital radio channels
- Superb FM reception
- Excellent sound quality
- Easy to use
- Fantastic discounts on offer



AMPLIFIER
SONY TA-FB940R
£350
- Superb, crisp, clean sounding amp
- A Best Buy Award-winning product
- 60w per channel
- Tone controls
- Headphone socket
- Great deals

CASSETTE DECK
YAMAHA KX-580SE
£250
- Best Buy Award-winner in 2002
- Makes quality analogue copies
- Twin-head for better playback
- Dolby Noise Reduction B, C, S

SPEAKERS
MISSION M31i
£140
- Work best 20-50cm from rear wall
- Sound great head-on, so no need to add toe-in
- Biwire to hear them at their best
- Sensitivity of 88dB

System Builder

HOME CINEMA HI-FI TVs & PROJECTORS MP3

KNOW HOW

What to look for when you are buying a portable MP3 player, including size, battery life and ease-of-use

BATTERY LIFE
Battery life is another important consideration, especially as most players use batteries that can only be recharged when connected to a docking station and/or computer. Look for at least 10 hours use between charges.

HOW MANY SONGS?
On average, 1GB of storage will hold up to 250 songs. Typical player options range from a 512MB ultraportable (120 songs) to a 4-6GB mini player (1000-1500 tunes) and larger 20GB (or bigger) 5000-tracks jukebox designs.

HDD vs SOLID-STATE
Larger jukebox players like this Apple iPod use hard-disk drives (HDD) to store songs, while the smaller stick-style players use solid-state storage. The former can store more, the latter have no moving parts, so your music will be skip-free.

EASE OF USE
Usability is also important – try before you buy, making sure the combination of track-navigation and volume controls suits you.

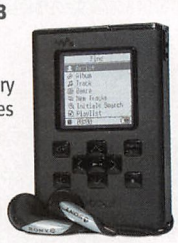
HEADPHONES
iPod headphones (as with those bundled with the majority of players) are the weak link. You'll hear more of what the player can do if you invest in a better pair.

MUST HAVES

Portables
Take MP3 anywhere

APPLE iPOD SHUFFLE
FROM £69
- 512MB (£69) and 1GB (£89) models
- Solid-state design for skip-free music
- 12 hour battery life
- AAC and MP3
- No display

SONY NW-HD5B
FROM £200
- 20GB only
- 40-hour battery
- Spare batteries only £30
- AAC, MP3, WMA files
- Black, red or silver casing
- Ultra-small



CREATIVE ZEN TOUCH £170
- A lot of storage (20GB) for the money
- 24-hour battery life
- Large display
- MP3 and WMA
- PC-only design

APPLE iPOD
FROM £219
- 30GB (£219) and 60GB (£299) units
- Colour screen and photo-file support
- AAC, MP3 and Apple Lossless
- 5-15 hr battery
- Black or white

FAQs

What player's right for you?
Decide your budget and how much music you want to carry with you. The more features and storage you want adds bulk and cost. It's worth stretching your budget to buy the best capacity (and spec) you can afford, as your MP3 collection will build faster than you think.

Do I need to download?
Websites like Napster and iTunes sell a superb selection of tracks, but it's quick and easy to 'rip' MP3 files from your own CD collection – the players come with all the software you need, or download iTunes.

What about extra features?
If you're a big radio fan, look out for players with built-in FM tuners. A colour screen (coupled with a large storage capacity) is handy for storing and displaying digital photos. Some players are fully multimedia capable, supporting MP4 video files, too. Other options include making voice recordings.

Is one player enough?
You might find you buy several players for different uses – for example an iPod Shuffle for your daily commute and a larger-capacity player for long holidays. It makes sense to go with players from the same manufacturer – they'll share the same software, use the same file formats, and even share some accessories.

Will it work with my computer?
Check you have sufficient system memory, storage space and the right operating system (some players are PC-only). Your computer needs USB sockets (preferably 2.0) to connect to the MP3 player.

Broadband Internet access is incredibly useful, too – not only does it allow you to download tracks from online music stores, but it allows your software to sync up with Gracenote's CDDB (CD Database) – automatically filling in the track details for every CD.

What rate should I rip at?
The more compressed a music track, the lower its 'bit-rate.' Don't rip at below 128kbps – the typical rate used by the download stores. Higher bit-rate files hold more musical data – so you'll hear more detail – but take up much more storage capacity.

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WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
The world's No.1 home entertainment magazine

The No.1 source of clear, expert and independent advice
Over 1,000,000 readers worldwide every month agree!

Buyer's Guide

OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED PRODUCTS

Welcome to the UK's most **in-depth guide** to home cinema and hi-fi. Every product, every price

WITH MORE THAN 1400 test verdicts, including all the tech-specs you need to know, our *Buyer's Guide* is your passport to a new world of top-class hi-fi and home cinema kit that'll transform your music and movies.

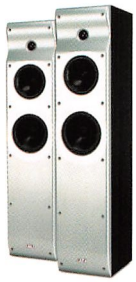
Our 29 years of testing experience – combined with unique reviewing facilities and access to the latest products first – arms you with clear, independent advice.

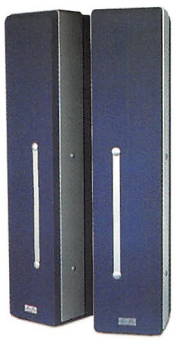
Our editorial staff are experts in every area of home entertainment, trained in the latest technologies and briefed on all the hot new products. Where rival magazines rely on isolated writers reviewing in a range of locations, WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION works as a team to thoroughly test kit in our dedicated review facilities. These aren't forbidding laboratories, but custom-built rooms of different sizes combining high-tech test systems with real-world fixtures and fittings like sofas and bookcases. This allows us to tell just how the review products would look and sound in your homes.

Our reviewing rooms may have soft furnishings, but we're hard on the kit we test. It's not enough for a product to perform well, it also has to offer great value for money. We conduct ruthless head-to-head tests to uncover the class-leaders in every category at every price point – as well as some great specialist options.

What can we help you buy today?

We've invested almost a million pounds in our state-of-the-art testing facilities, where our world-renowned reviewers put more kit through its paces than any other magazine. We can – and do – handle anything from the smallest MP3 player to the largest home cinema system





HOME CINEMA
DVD PLAYERS • DVD RECORDERS 118
DVD RECORDERS • SURROUND AMPS & RECEIVERS 119
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感動

hearing is believing AV

It's true... digital home cinema surround sound, without wires. Just add your TV. YSP-800 from Yamaha.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TECHNOLOGY
YAMAHA DIGITAL SOUND PROJECTORS

WHAT HOME CINEMA BEST BUY

HOME CINEMA Choice Best Buy GUARANTEE

YAMAHA

www.yamaha-uk.com
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Buy smarter, buy better

What follows is the UK's most comprehensive guide to home cinema and hi-fi, and it has just got bigger and better. Follow our step-by-step guide to help you buy the best for your cash.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

HOW WE CAN HELP

1 Section
All products of the same type are in the same place – for example, all the DVD players are in the first section. All sections list products alphabetically, with the larger sections being sub-divided by price. For example: DVD players 'under £400' are listed first, and those '£401 and over' follow aftewards.

2 Product name
This column gives you the exact name and model of products. Use it to search in the shops or online.

3 Price
This is a suggested retail price. *It's not necessarily the price you must pay*. See our shopping advice below for how to get the greatest deals.

4 Date tested
This is the date of the issue in which the product was last tested (AW indicates the annual Awards issue). FT means the product featured in our *First Tests* section. GT or ST mean it faced a selection of similar products in a comprehensive *Group Test* or an extra-large *Supertest* or *Megatest*. To get hold of the relevant back issues, call 08456 777813.

5 Verdict
We give every product a star rating, out of five. Five stars mean the product is excellent, a real class-leader; a four-star verdict means the product is very good, and is highly recommended; three stars means it's only an average product, but worth considering; two stars mean you could do better elsewhere; one-star products are best avoided.

6 We said...
A short verdict on each products, with longer summaries for Award-winners and best in class products.

7 Data
Our updated *Buyer's Guide* includes more essential data than ever in an easier to use format. We've included a *Glossary* on p226 to explain certain technical terms. And finally, there's a comprehensive *Directory* on p228, with every manufacturer's phone number you'll need.

Clare Newsome
Editor

SHOP SMARTER

Five golden rules to follow before you flex your credit card...

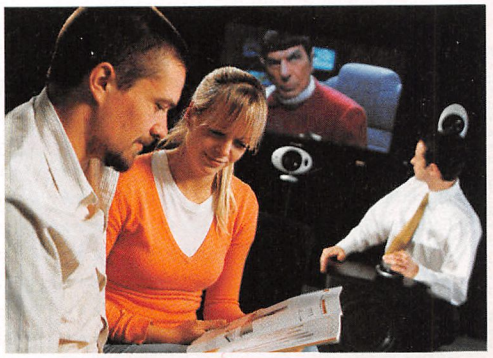
1 Get smart
Use our tests and *Buyer's Guide* to learn about the products. It pays to be spec-savvy.

2 Insist on a demonstration
Arrange to audition any kit in a listening room or during a home trial – not on the shop floor.

3 Take along your favourite discs
Improving your system is all about getting more from the music and movies you love, and spinning well-known CDs and DVDs will help you see and hear how systems measure up.

4 Cheap doesn't mean good value
Search around and compare prices from a range of suppliers, but always consider service and support as part of the package.

5 Take your time
Be sure you're happy with your choices. If in doubt, always ask – never rush your decision.



DVD players

Digital video and audio on handy CD-sized discs

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS					INPUTS & OUTPUTS													
					DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Phono out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out	six-channel out	Dolby decoding	DTS decoding	PAL prog scan	NTSC prog scan
Cambridge Audio Azur 540D	200	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Sonically impressive but you can get a much better picture.	●			●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●		●	●
Denon DVD-1720	130	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent picture and sound - one of the best at this price.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-1920	250	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	DVD player Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

Denon DVD-1920

Cracking value for money and a step up from the outgoing model in every department. Excellent picture performance via the HDMI output and, thankfully also offers superb picture quality from its component outputs. As a high-quality universal player at a reasonable price, the DVD-1920 is very good indeed.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-1920

Goodmans GDVD100WLCD(port)	250	UMP3.05	★★★★☆	Solid player, with surprisingly good picture quality.	●			●		●		●							●			●		●	
Harman-Kardon DV22	300	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks but it can't match the best.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
Harman-Kardon DVD31	400	03.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well-made and accomplished but the price is just too high.	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Limit DVD800SE	150	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Tuning by Cyrus has made this special with music.				●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●			
Mustek PL-408 (portable)	260	09.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	We can't think of a single reason to buy this player.				●	●	●	●	●	●				●		●						●
NAD T513	170	Awd04/FT	★★★☆☆	Not a bad performer but there's better value around.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
NAD T533	250	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	You'll struggle to find improvements over budget models.	●			●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●
NAD T571(DVD/CD changer)	350	11.02/FT	★★★★☆	A neat CD multiplayer and DVD player from NAD.				●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●						●
Pacific DVD 1002 Mk2	30	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very capable for the money - ideal for a second-room.				●			●		●	●			●		●						
Panasonic DVD-LS85(portable)	299	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	Good looking but rivals perform better and cost less.				●			●						●	●							
Philips DVP9000S	400	10.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Not good enough at this price level despite its technology.		●	●	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●			●	●
Pioneer DV-585A	130	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Attractive only if you need a universal player.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV380	80	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Feels, looks and sounds like money well spent.				●		●		●	●	●			●		●					●	●
Samsung DVD-HD950	135	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Well-specified and excellent sound delivery.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Sony MV-700HR(portable)	340	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but it's not great value for money.				●			●							●							
Toshiba SD-150E	49	08.05/FT	★★★★★	One heck of a bargain - picture and sound is awesome.				●			●	●		●			●		●					●	
Toshiba SD-350E	99	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player under £150 in Awards 2005. Sensational.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●			●	●	●	●
Toshiba SD-P1600(portable)	179	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Outperforms all its rivals - it's an absolute bargain.				●									●								
Yamaha DVD-S1500	400	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer but there are better universal players.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●
Yamaha DVD-S557	130	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent all-rounder but doesn't have the abilities of others.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Yamaha DVD-S657	160	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Nothing horrendously wrong, but there are better around.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

BUDGET £401 and over

Arcam DiVA DV78	700	05.04/GT	★★★★★	You can have the best of both worlds in one box.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Arcam DiVA DV79	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £700-£1500 in Awards 2005.	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Arcam FMJ DV29	1600	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Awe-inspiring visuals and impressive music delivery.	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Cyrus DVD6	750	06.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Good-looking but won't disturb the best in class.				●	●		●		●				●	●							
Denon DVD-2910	600	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £250-£750 in Awards 2004.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-3910	900	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Outstanding, especially paired with the AVR-3805.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-A1XV	2500	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005.	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lexicon RT-10	2000	01.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great picture, but ordinary sound at an extraordinary price	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Linn Unidisk SC	2995	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Pair with the Chakra C1500 amp for quality multichannel.	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●		
Meridian G91DAB	3895	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Not just a DVD player but a processor and tuner as well.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian G98	3350	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player over £1000 in Awards 2004. Sensational.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●
Myryad Z122	500	05.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable performer but it doesn't justifying its price.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Naim DVD5	2565	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Stunning player - a must try for high-end system owners.	●			●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Onkyo DV-SP1000E	2800	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning player - you need to see it to believe.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-668AV-S	600	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Credible performer but stereo is merely adequate.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-757Ai	600	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This is still one of the best universal players around.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-868AVi	800	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Great picture, thanks to cutting-edge HDMI technology.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Primare DVD30	1800	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good, but for this money it needs to be exceptional.	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
TEAC DV-50	4500	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. No longer the class-leader.	●	●					●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Yamaha DVD-S2500	700	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £300-£700 in Awards 2005. Fine picture.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

DVD recorders

Record TV pictures digitally in superb quality

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 242

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS					RECORDS				INPUTS & OUTPUTS									
					DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	Hard disk	S-Video in	RGB Scart in	FireWire in	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out
Akai ADR-5800Di	150	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Has its merits for sure, but there are better around.				●	●		●	●			●	●		●	●	●			●	●	
Alba RDVD1000	99	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Average recordings but it is ridiculously cheap.				●	●		●								●	●			●	●	●
Goodmans GHDD177DVDR	199	12.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Features to entice you, but performance is poor.				●	●		●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Hitachi DV-RX7000E	240	12.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Lacks connectivity and others deliver far superior images.				●		●		●	●		●	●			●	●			●	●	
JVC DR-MH20	350	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine performer in most regards but there are better.						●		●	●		●	●				●			●	●	
Liteon LVW-5045	350	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable buy on paper, but the results are mediocre.				●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Mustek R100B	129	06.04/GT	★★★☆☆	This provides fine value on a quality-per-quid basis.				●	●		●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Mustek R580M	269	12.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Does nothing to persuade us to part with our cash.					●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	

DVD recorders continued...

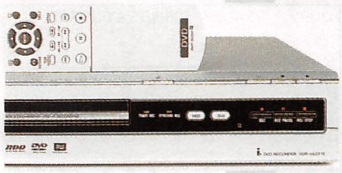
Record TV pictures digitally in superb quality

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS					RECORDS				INPUTS & OUTPUTS									
					DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	Hard disk	S-Video in	RGB Scart in	FireWire in	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out
Panasonic DMR-EH50	400	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine value - a solid contender that demands an audition.			●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●		
Panasonic DMR-ES10	199	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD recorder under £250 in Award 2005.			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●			●		
Panasonic DMR-ES20D	260	12.05/ST	★★★★★	Top-drawer DVD playback and a digital tuner built-in.			●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●			●		
Panasonic DMR-ES30V	350	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Worth a look if you want a DVD and VCR recorder in one box.			●		●	●		●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●		
Pioneer DVR-433H-S	299	12.05/ST	★★★★☆	Extremely user-friendly and good picture performance.			●		●			●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●		
Samsung DVD-VR325	299	12.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Doubles as a VHS deck - let down by poor picture.			●	●	●			●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●	●	
Sharp DV-HR400	400	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Not bad, but it's ordinary fare compared to the best.			●	●	●	●		●			●	●		●	●	●			●	●	
Sony RDR-GX210	200	12.05/ST	★★★★☆	Great analogue TV images and recording quality.			●	●	●		●	●			●	●		●		●			●	●	
Sony RDR-HX510	400	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD/HDD recorder £250-£450 in Awards 2005.			●	●	●		●	●		●	●			●	●	●			●	●	
Toshiba D-R150SB	179	12.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Does everything reasonable well, but nothing more.			●	●	●			●			●	●		●		●			●		
Toshiba RD-XS34	399	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent recording capability and playback - feature laden.					●			●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●	●	

BUDGET £401 and over

Panasonic DMR-EH60D	550	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Does it all in style - includes a 200GB HD and Freeview.	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●			●		
Panasonic DMR-EH80V	600	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great for burning VHS to hard disk, then archiving to DVD.			●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●			●	●			●		
Pioneer DVR-530H	500	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Easy to set-up, good DVD picture and a 160GB hard disk.			●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●	●			●		
Pioneer DVR-920H	1300	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Feature-packed machine that is an impressive performer.			●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	
Sony RDR-HXD710	500	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD/HDD recorder £450+ in Awards 2005.			●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	



Sony RDR-HXD710

The '710 ticks all our current boxes for DVD recorders, and then some: The built-in tuner is the match of the latest high-end screens and HDD in highest-quality mode is extremely faithful. Burn to a disc and the results are just as impressive. As good a reason to jump on the DVD/HDD bandwagon as we have seen.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
DVD & HARD-DISK RECORDERS
SONY RDR-HXD710

Surround amps & receivers

Home cinema and hi-fi sound through multiple speakers

BUDGET Up to £800

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Tuner presets	Channels/power	SURROUND MODES								INPUTS & OUTPUTS							
							Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
Cambridge Audio Azur 540R 6.1	250	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for gung-ho movie-watching.	40	6x80	●		●	●	●	●					5	7	●	●	●			●	●
Denon AVR-1705	250	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Astonishing - top choice at £250.	40	6x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	7	●	●	●			●	
Denon AVR-1906	330	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Best receiver under £350 Awards 2005.	40	7x80	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	
Denon AVR-2106	450	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Impressive with movies and music.	40	7x90	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	8	●	●	●			●	
Denon AVR-2805	700	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best receiver £500-£750 Awards 2004.	56	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	
Eltax AVR800	200	04.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Killer specifications for the price.	20	6x92	●		●	●	●						7	1	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 130	350	06.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Game performer with real strengths.	30	5x40	●										8	6	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 135	350	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Likeable - a real pleasure to listen to.		6x40	●		●	●	●	●					7	0	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 430	800	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but isn't not special enough.	30	7x65	●		●	●	●	●	●				3	8	●	●	●				
Marantz SR4500	350	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer with plenty of features .	50	7x80	●	●	●		●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Onkyo TX-SR503E	250	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Cracking - good price and performance.	40	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	3	●	●	●				
Onkyo TX-SR653E	500	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine-value all-rounder with a DAB tuner.	40	7x125	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	1	●	●	●			●	
Onkyo TX-SR702E	700	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Just the ticket for those who like it loud.	40	7x130	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		7	7	●	●	●			●	●
Panasonic SA-XR55	400	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Halfway-decent, but there are better.		7x100	●	●	●				●				11	8	●	●	●				
Pioneer VSX-1015	500	11.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Only one problem - aggressive sound.	30	7x150	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		8	8	●	●	●			●	
Pioneer VSX-2014i	800	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well-equipped, impressive verve.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			4	8	●	●	●	●		●	
Pioneer VSX-915	300	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Exciting but shows a lack of subtlety.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●					6	8	●	●	●			●	
Pioneer VSX-C502	300	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Svelte looks and spacious sound.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				4	6	●	●	●				
Sony STR-DB895D	350	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good-sounding and includes DAB radio.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				5	8	●	●	●			●	
Sony STR-DB900	400	03.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Classically digital - fierce and forward.	30	6x120	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	6	●	●	●			●	●
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE	500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Product of the year in Awards 2005.	-	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	●

Yamaha DSP-AX757SE

Sounds much more expensive than it actually is, and will simply dismiss the boundaries of your living room, transporting you to the more spacious surroundings of a real cinema. It also retains all the stereo musicality of its acclaimed forebear into the bargain. Buy one today – it's a fabulous product.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SURROUND AMPS/RECEIVERS
YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE

Yamaha RX-V1500	700	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Fully loaded and performs superbly.	40	7x120	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			11	8	●	●	●			●	●
Yamaha RX-V357	169	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Top performer for the money.	40	100x5	●			●	●						6	6	●	●	●				
Yamaha RX-V457	299	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Unimpressive at this price.	8	6x85	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	0	●	●	●			●	
Yamaha RX-V657	470	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Class act - hits hard where it counts.	40	7x95	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	

BUDGET £801 and over

Arcam DiVA AVR250	1000	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Best for £750-£1000 in Awards 2004.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Arcam DiVA AVR300	1300	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning with the DV79 DVD player.	25	7x100	●	●	●	●		●	●				9	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Denon AVC-AIIXV	2500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Most of the ability of its bigger brother.	-	7x140	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●	●		●	

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
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Surround amps & receivers cont...

Home cinema and hi-fi sound through multiple speakers

BUDGET £801 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Tuner presets	Channels/power	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
Denon AVC-AIXV	4000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005.	-	10x170	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	16	22	●	●	●	●		●	
Denon AVR-3806	1000	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Powerful and a feature-fan's dream.	56	7x120	●	●	●	●		●	●				12	8	●	●	●		●	●	
Harman-Kardon AVR 630	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good performer with great usability.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●							7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR7300	1700	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive - powerful and dynamic.	30	7x110	●			●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon DPR2005	1300	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Slimline, classy all-digital receiver.	30	7x120	●		●	●	●	●	●				12	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Lexicon RV-8	5000	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Capable, flexible and very well-built.		7x140	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	8	●	●	●			●	●
NAD T763	900	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Enjoyable listen but not a feature king.	30	6x100	●	●	●	●	●	●					6	8	●	●	●				
NAD T773	1200	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting with music and movies.		7x110	●			●	●	●					10	8	●	●	●		●		
Onkyo TX-NR5000E	4000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Stupendous with real staying power.	40	7x200	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai	3000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Performs astonishingly well - a fine buy.	-	7x150	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Pioneer VSX-AX4AVI	1000	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Top-drawer - a darn good receiver.	-	7x180	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			7	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Primare SPA21	2000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best amp £1500-£2500 Awards 2005.	-	5x100	●		●	●	●	●					5	8	●	●	●				●
Rotel RSX-1056	1195	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Genuinely classy and a great listen.	30	5x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Rotel RSX-1067	1795	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Sublime sound but the price is high.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Sony STR-DA7100ES	1699	10.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Lots of features but the sound is tame.	30	7x170	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				5	2	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Yamaha DSP-Z9	3300	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Best amp over £1000 in Awards 2004.		9.1/170W	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	10	●	●	●	●		●	●
Yamaha RX-V4600	1000	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best receiver £750-£1500Awards 2005	40	7/130	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			8	8	●	●	●	●		●	

Processors

Team with a power amp for a high-end multichannel solution

BUDGET Up to £10000

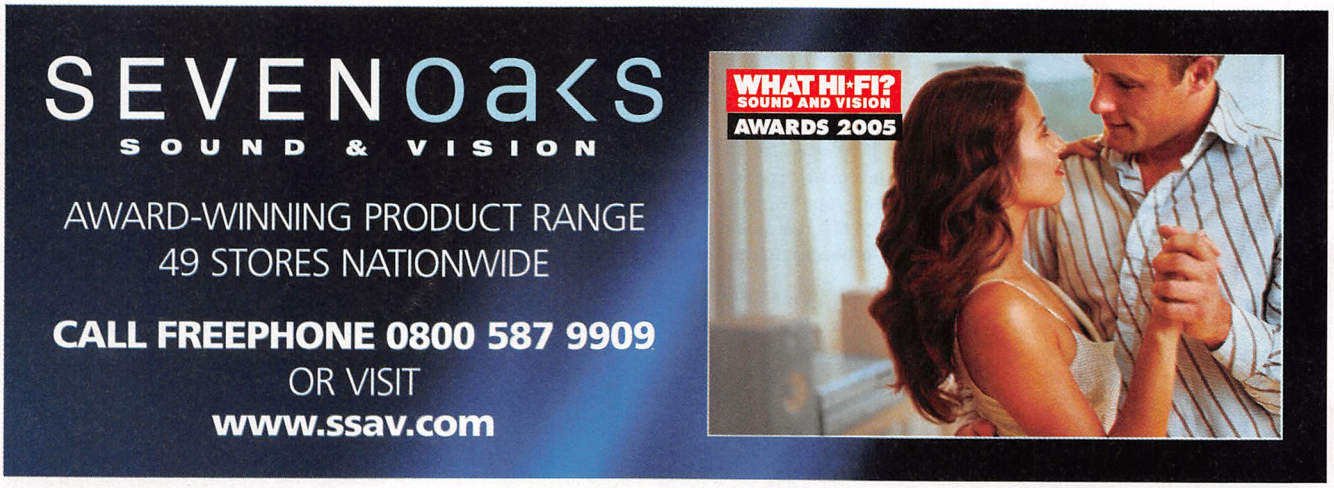
PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
Arcam AVP700	1400	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent but uninspiring with the Arcam P1000 power amp.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Cyrus AV8	1100	05.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Affordable 5.1 channel system with three SmartPower amps.	●										3	6	●	●	●				
Krell HTS7.1	8998	01.04/FT	★★★★★	Class leader - comfortable with music and movies.	●		●	●	●	●		●	●		10	8	●	●	●				
Lexicon MC-12	8100	04.02/FT	★★★★★	On our electronic elite shortlist - it's jaw-droppingly good.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	7	●	●	●			●	●
Lexicon MC-8 (balanced)	5750	12.03/FT	★★★★★	A belter - almost as much ability as its MC-12B brother.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	6	●	●	●			●	●
Meridian 861	9833	02.00/FT	★★★★★	Brilliant, better-sounding than almost everything else.	●	●	●					●	●	●	12	10	●	●	●		●	●	●
Meridian G68ADV	4995	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Fantastic - a very fine niche product.	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●				●
Myryad MXD6000/MXA7150	5900	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Sombre appearance but a top-class performer.	●		●	●	●	●					9	8	●	●	●				
Naim AV2	2395	12.02/FT	★★★★★	AV2 and NAP V150 power amp - truly thrilling combination.	●		●	●							10	8	●	●	●			●	●
Parasound Halo C1	4500	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Strong surround abilities when paired with the A51 amp.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Parasound Halo C2	3000	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	Pricey but excellent kit with fine sound and huge appeal.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Rotel RSP-1068	995	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fistful of features and solid performance; just short of special.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	10	●	●	●		●	●	●
Rotel RSP-1098	2295	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Terrific - worthy of comparison with much pricier designs.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●		●	●	●

Subwoofers

Bass reinforcement for both home cinema and hi-fi

BUDGET Up to £2095

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	300	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Not the worst, but others give more weight and depth.	A150	22	36x38x31	●		●	●				2
ATC C-4	2350	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Rhythmic and musical, at ease with pretty much anything.	650	31	58x50x50		●		●			●	Bk



RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
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Subwoofers continued...

Bass reinforcement for both home cinema and hi-fi

BUDGET Up to £2095

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Audio Pro B1.36	400	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Worthy choice if you want plenty of thump from a compact box.	200	25	45x35x39	●		●	●		●	●	Bk
B&W ASW300	250	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a fair slice of low-end weight and ability for the price.	A100	20	41x33x38	●		●	●	●	●	●	2
B&W ASW675	650	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Cracking little sub that will suit more than DM600S3 owners.	500	25	34x34x41		●	●		●		●	3
B&W ASW750	1200	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in 03 Awards. Solid bass delivered with power.	A1000	30	44.40.48		●	●		●		●	5
B&W ASW825	1600	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning - weight, punch, speed and definition.	1000	30	53x53x35		●	●		●		●	3
B&W PV1	950	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer over £900 in Awards 2005. Remarkable.	500	2x20	34x29x35		●	●	●	●		●	Sl
DALI S1.5	999	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Big box with huge bass - superbly controlled, detailed and clear.	300	38	56x45x49		●	●		●		●	3
Dynaudio SUB300	900	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	The level of performance fails to live up to its price tag.	200	24	34x32x47	●		●				●	4
Energy S8.3	260	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Does a decent enough job but it is not going to blow your mind.	A100	20	42x28x36	●		●	●			●	3
Epos ELS SUB	380	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Performs well with both music and movies - good price too.	300	25	37x34x45		●	●	●	●	●	●	3
Eton E300	695	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Good design - When right it's capable of power and authority.	A300	25	40x35x30		●	●	●	●	●	●	4
Jamo D7Sub	999	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Specs look good on paper but it fails to deliver in use.	400	38	49x59x44		●	●					Gr
KEF PSW 3500	599	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	By no means a bad product but it fails to offer anything special.	300	30	45x60x40		●	●		●		●	4
M&K MX-350 MkII (THX)	1895	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Little short of breathtaking - partner with pedigree equipment.	A75	20	58x39x51		●	●	●			●	Bk
M&K V1250THX	895	06.99/FT	★★★★★	Part of the 750THX package - stunning home cinema performer.	125	30	46x39x58		●	●				●	Bk
Mission m5as	500	10.02/GT	★★★★★	One of the most musical subs. A winner if you've the space.	350	30	58x35x51	●		●	●			●	3
MJ Acoustics Pro 100 (Wood)	699	04.02/FT	★★★★★	Superb punch with excellent extension - not for small rooms.	100	2x20	37x59x31		●	●	●			●	6
MJ Acoustics Pro 50 (Paint)	299	06.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2002. Awesome clout from a tiny enclosure.	50	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	2
MJ Acoustics Reference 1 MkII	799	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Attractive proposition and certainly worth an audition.	150	27	49x42x32	●		●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref 100 (Paint)	350	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 03. Quality sub with a gutsy performance.	120	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	2
MJ Acoustics Ref 150 (Wood)	629	Awd03/GT	★★★★☆	Strong sub that works well with both movies and music.	150	25	36x30x29		●	●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref 150 MkII	499	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Hits the spot for high-quality, well-defined bass and a fine finish.	150	25	30x30x35		●	●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Reference 200	650	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Capable, compact sub but there's plenty of competition.	200	25	30x30x36		●	●	●	●		●	9
MJ Acoustics Reference I MkIII	799	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Very talented - fast, punchy and well-made.	250	25	45x50x32	●		●	●	●		●	6
Monitor Audio ASW 100	300	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	A solid all-rounder that should appeal in most set-ups.	A120	25	32x32x34	●		●	●			●	2
Monitor Audio FB210	700	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Big bold sound - but it's not a sub for smaller spaces.	250	2x25	50x37x37	●		●	●			●	2
Mordaunt-Short MS309	230	05.04/GT	★★★★★	First really cheap sub ever to impress us - bargain bass boost.	A150	25	37x37x37	●			●			●	3
Mordaunt-Short MS909W	500	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine effort that will work well in a wide range of systems.	200	30	42x42x42	●		●	●	●		●	2
Pioneer SW2505	600	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Can't match its rivals in terms of overall quality.	250	30	43x48x43		●	●				●	Bch
Quad L Subwoofer	700	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer £500-£900 in Awards 2005.	300	30	53x34x47		●	●	●	●		●	4
REL Acoustics Q-150E MkII	500	09.03/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Awards 03. Sensible but effective revamp.	150	25	32x29x33		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Quake (Paint)	350	12.02/FT	★★★★★	REL's pocket rocket merits instant inclusion on any audition list.	100	20	29x25x27		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Quake (Wood)	425	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Produces prodigious bass considering its diminutive stature.	100	20	29x25x27		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Stadium III	1500	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2002. Stunning performer in large rooms.	200	25	56x59x39	●		●	●			●	5
REL Acoustics Stampede (Paint)	550	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer £300-£600 in Awards 2004.	100	20	40x28x29		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Storm 5	1000	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Seriously impressive product from Welsh wizard REL.	200	25	52x35x37		●	●	●	●		●	6
REL Acoustics Strata 5(wood)	800	06.04/FT	★★★★★	Combines user-friendly appeal with excellent sonic ability.	A150	250	32x46x33		●	●	●			●	6
REL Acoustics Q400E (paint)	1000	09.00/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Not big, but it sounds gigantic.	400	30	42x39x43		●	●	●			●	Bk
Sunfire Corp True Subwoofer EQ	1695	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Cute unit that emits bass like you wouldn't believe.	2700	2x25	28x28x28		●	●	●	●	●	●	Bk
Sunfire Corp True Sub EQ Sig	2195	11.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Small but madly powerful, and offers punch and weight aplenty.	2700	2x30	33x33x33		●	●	●	●		●	Bk
Tannoy TS-12	499	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Not the last word in subs but it's mighty impressive, all the same.	500	30	37x34x34		●	●		●		●	Bk
Velodyne CHT-12R	469	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Subwoofer Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	200	30	46x38x50	●		●	●	●	●		3

Velodyne CHT-12R

This is one punchy, powerful subwoofer for the money. As the name implies it totes a big 12-inch driver backed by 200 watts of output, so it's got serious air-moving guts as a result - enough to shake the sofa in no uncertain terms. It'll complement any affordable home cinema system very nicely. Try one for size.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SUBWOOFERS
VELODYNE CHT-12R

Velodyne SPL-1000R	899	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Small sub with plenty of muscle - automated EQ is a clever touch.	1000	25	32x31x36		●	●	●	●		●	3
Wharfedale Diamond SW150	250	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer under £300 in Awards 2004.	A150	25	33x33x37	●		●	●	●	●	●	3
Wharfedale SW250	400	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Produces an explosive but controlled low-frequency hit.	250	25	42x42x38			●				●	5
Yamaha YST FSW100	150	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Plenty of punch and control from a small, attractive unit.	75	30	37x40x16	●		●					3
Yamaha YST-SW215	180	10.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	The price makes it tempting, but performance is well below par.	150	20	29x36x32	●		●	●			●	Bk
Yamaha YST-SW315	270	09.03/FT	★★★☆☆	A reasonable subwoofer, but it's not good enough to excite.	270	25	24x59x45	●		●	●			●	Bk

Compact speaker packages

Surround sound enjoyment from small, stylish speaker systems

BUDGET Up to £4500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aego T	800	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	The excellent satellites offer first-class sound.	100	8	86	20x12x15	20x12x15	20x12x15	36x36x36		Bk
Arcaydis AK5.1	1092	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	A sense of scale that others find hard to match.	50	90	3.9	30x16x9	30x16x9	30x16x9	39x29x33		2
Audica CS-system 1	650	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Innovative and thoughtful - a real eye-opener.	100	87	4	-	9x80x19	19x7x19	42x35x35		2
Audica CS-system 3	1100	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Handsome and aurally good-natured but it's expensive.	100	87	4	105x8x19	9x28x19	19x7x19	39x40x40		2

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
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★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Compact speaker packages continued...

Surround sound enjoyment from small, stylish speaker systems

BUDGET Up to £4500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Audio Pro Cinema Precision	500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Decent, but the overall sound lacks excitement.	50	88	8	21x10xx8	21x10xx8	21x10xx8	32x32x32		Al
B&W MT-20	975	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	100	85	8	24x11x17	24x11x17	24x11x17	33x33x39		2

B&W MT-20

Classy and competent, the latest B&W style package looks great, as you would expect. Its elegant design is solidly constructed and looks lustrous. Importantly, the MT-20 sounds great, too, revelling in opportunities to show off its detail, timing and dynamics. Overall, it's staggering value for money.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
B&W MT-20

B&W MT-30	1575	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Best compact speaker package £1500+ Awards 2005.	100	85	4.8	24x11x17	11x24x17	24x11x17	34x29x35		3
B&W VM1/AS1	850	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent package, but newer rivals have eclipsed it.	100	91	8	52x12x9	52x12x9	52x12x9	38x25x38		3
Blue Sky Sky System 1	3524	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Remarkable - genuine rival for established brands.	A2x100	-	-	31x20x30	20x31x30	31x20x30	46x43x56		Bk
Bose Acoustimass 10 Series III	800	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Fair-sounding and it's very small, sub apart.	100	-	4	16x8x10	16x8x10	16x8x10	42x21x64		3
Bose Acoustimass 15 Series II	1050	02.03/ST	★★★★☆	Delivers thrills without filling the room with boxes.	200	-	4	16x8x10	16x8x10	16x8x10	42x74x20		3
Cabasse XO2	750	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	This compact, elegant system is powerful and cohesive.	70	92	8	13x13x10	13x13x10	13x13x10	37 x26 x37		2
Canton CD 4.25(+CD50)	1660	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a compelling blend of looks and ability.	120	86.5	4	101x9x10	9x43x10	101x9x10	47x30x44		Al
Canton Movie CD 1	480	Awd.03	★★★★★	Tiny kit at a great price - outstanding option.	45	86.5	4	14x9x10	9x22x10	14x9x10	39x24x43		Al
Castle Compact CC3	1000	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Happy with music and movies - will sit close to the wall.	70	86	8	20x14x16	14x32x16	20x14x16	35x35x36		11
Eclipse TD 5.1(5x307/316)	1300	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Discrete and covetable but the sound is not flawless.	70	80	8	16x12x16	16x12x16	16x12x16	35x24x30		3
Elac Cinema 3 ESP II	1200	11.04/ST	★★★★☆	Handsome but not value for money soundwise.	50	86	4	12x9x9	12x9x9	12x9x9	39x20x31		Al
Elac Cinema One 5.1	399	12.02/ST	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Highly effective.	60	84	6	12x9x10	12x9x10	12x9x10	37x28x38		2
Elac Cinema XL	499	03.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Good looking system with room-filling sound.	120	85	6	12x9x10	10x28x15	12x9x10	40x25x38		Al
Energy Act6	600	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Hamstrung by an irritating lack of integration.		87	8	16x17x11	16x17x11	16x17x11	41x25x35		Sl
Energy Encore	1000	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Quality kit that provides a good listen with movies.	125	89	8	19.13.19	12x40x20	19x13x19	35x35x36		Bk
Focal-JMlab 3SibXL/2Sib/Cub2	1099	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Capable and refined package with a top class sub.	100	91	4	50x14x10	50x14x10	25x14x16	33x30x30		Bk
Infinity Oreus sub/sat package	800	03.03/FT	★★★★★	Breathtaking design - great sound and appeal.	100	85	6	36x12x11	12x36x10	36x12x11	37x25x45		Sl
Infinity TSS-750	500	04.04/ST	★★★★★	Appealing package with good performance and looks.	100	88	8	15x11x11	11x24x11	15x11x11	43x27x40		2
Jamo D6PTX	1799	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Delivers fabulous sound for a sensible price.	180	89	4	29x60x15	29x60x15	21x44x15	44x45x44		Bk
KEF KHT 2005.2	600	11.05/GT	★★★★★	A recent price cut has rivived this stalwart package.	100	88	8	20x13x15	20x13x15	20x13x15	37x32x32		2
KEF KHT1005	300	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best compact speaker package under £500. Terrific.	100	86	8	17x11x8	11x18x8	17x11x8	36x32x32		Al
KEF KHT9000ACE	4200	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish and capable of a surprisingly big sound.	150	88	8	56x25x13	25x56x13	56x25x13	47x50x50		Sl
KEF Q Compact AV	850	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Detailed and insightful listen, but a little lightweight.	100	89	8	27x18x25	16x43x22	27x18x25	36x50x33	●	4
M&K K-5 Package	1495	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Builds on the strengths of its Award-winning forebear.	150	-	8	19x13x15	19x13x15	19x13x15	35x26x25		2
M&K K-7 Package	1750	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fun-sounding set-up - front runner with movies.	200	90	4	33x12x15	12x33x15	33x12x15	25x35x24		Gry
M&K Xenon 25	2099	12.03/FT	★★★★☆	Forceful and weighty sound - largely effective.	200	n/a	4	16x10x15	16x10x15	16x10x17	47x39x51		4
Mirage Nanosat	600	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Classic example of a mismatch between sats and sub.	100	88	8	20x13x15	20x13x15	20x13x15	37x32x32		2
Mirage Omnisat/OM200	1800	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Clever - an intriguing alternative to the norm.	150	89	8	20x16x20	20x16x20	20x16x20	48x42x114		4
Mission Cinema M30	480	04.04/ST	★★★★★	Superb - compact and an all-round performer.	75	86	8	22x15x19	14x50x13	22x15x19	40x25x41	●	2
Mission fs1-AV	500	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish NXT kit that's just right for its market.	100	88	8	32x8x4	32x8x4	32x8x4	40x49x34		Si
Mission M-Cube	1000	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Combines looks, discretion and excellent sound.	150	85	4	9x9x9	9x9x9	9x9x9	32x32x32		2
MJ Acoustics Pro Cin 1/Pro 50	799	02.03/ST	★★★★☆	For those who want small, conventional speakers.	100	88	8	23x16x12	23x16x12	23x16x12	33x28x28		8
Monitor Audio Radius	1050	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Capable, tiny satellites but the subwoofer is too harsh.	100	87	8	19x12x14	12x35x10	19x12x14	37x23x32		5
Mordaunt-Short Genie	800	05.05/ST	★★★★★	Compact package Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	100	86	4	22x13x17	13x30x16	22x13x17	42x37x37		Sl
Mordaunt-Short Premiere	400	12.02/ST	★★★★☆	Strong performance in stereo and surround.	80	86	4	18x11x13	11x28x13	18x11x13	31.31.31		2
Mordaunt-Short Premiere Plus	500	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	As cinematic experiences go this is a class act.	80	86	4	18x11x13	11x28x13	18x11x13	37x37x37		3
Morel Nova MkII	499	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Buy before the 31st Dec when the price goes up.	100	87	6	110dia	110dia	110dia	145x510dia		3
Morel SA2/C5	1495	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Well constructed but offers more style than substance.	120	85	8	18x14x9	16x51x16	18x14x9	No		3
Pioneer SV410	399	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Ideal for home cinema fans on a tight budget.	100	85	8	105x21x21	68x37x53	105x21x21	38x30x38		Sl/Bk
ProAc Response Hexa 5.1	2496	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best compact package over £1000 in Awards 2004	100	86	8	22x14x15	14x33x15	22x14x15	48x42x11	●	4
Quad L-ite	1000	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Impressive - traditional looking, top-performer.	120	86	6	23x14x16	14x34x16	23x14x16	49x29x43	●	4
Ruark Acoustics Vita 120	1700	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Long-running compact package - still a class act.	120	86	6	20x11x16	20x32x16	20x11x16	37x30x30	●	2
Sequence Style 20 5.1	599	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Refined to the point of boredom.	60	88	6	25x10x20	11x24x20	25x10x20	37x15x40		Al
Tannoy Arena	1199	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Blisteringly effective and fearsomely competitive.	100	88	8	19x13x18	14x25x15	19x13x18	44x35x21		4
Tannoy Arena(including stands)	1580	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Class act - an audio and visual treat you must audition.	100	88	8	19x13x17	13x24x15	19x13x17	44x35x21		4
Triangle Galaxy 5.1	800	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	This package sounds great with both films and music.	75	90	8	20x13x12	20x13x12	20x13x12	32x32x32		Sl
Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP	500	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Best speaker package £500-£900 in Awards 2005.	75	86	6	24x15x17	12x33x13	24x15x17	33x33x36		4
Zingali Cinema I	1400	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Look appealing but let down in the sound department.	120	89	6	88x10x15	10x46x15	25x10x15	No		6

Full-size speaker packages

Larger surround sound speaker systems for better-quality sound

BUDGET Up to £10000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Nominal imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 3B	950	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Best full-size package under £1000 in Awards 2004.	150	88	8	88x22x19	17x46x19	36x19x24	36x38x31	●	2
Acoustic Energy Aelite 5.1	1895	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Brilliant performers they just melt into the background.	175	89	6	23x92x30	45x18x30	19x29x23	49x37x37	●	3
Acoustic Energy Linear 5.1	1300	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Lively and entertaining, you should give it an audition.	175	89	8	90x24x27	18x62x20	36x19x26	50x43x39	●	2

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Full-size speaker packages continued...

Larger surround sound speaker systems for better-quality sound

BUDGET Up to £10000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Nominal imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
ATC C1 Collection	2123	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Compact, but this set is capable of sounding huge.	300	84	8	30x16x21	16x60x21	30x16x21	44x35x35	●	3
ATC C3 Collection	5268	02.04/GT	★★★★★	First-rate solution for both music and movies.	300	86	4	33x20x26	33x20x26	33x20x26	58x50x50	●	3
ATC C5 Collection	11026	03.04/FT	★★★★☆	Great for CD and SACD/DVD-A but ruthlessly revealing	A250	-	-	47x39x40	25x65x57	47x29x40	58x50x50		Va
Audio Pro Black Diamond	1550	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Classy looking and cope well with movie soundtracks.	150	87	8	101x19x32	19x56x27	34x25x25	45x35x39	●	1
Audio Pro Bravo FX	1850	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Not without flaws, but well worth auditioning.	125	87	4	29x19x26	19x46x26	29x19x26	38x35x35		2
Audio Pro Image 44 system	1150	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Good-looking, well-made and a fine listen.	100	87	4	116x13x22	20x13x18	13x42x18	38x35x35		Bk
B&W 704 System	4000	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Superb speakers that can make an incredible impact.	120	89	8	96x22x32	31x45x29	30x38x17	44x40x48	●	5
B&W 805S/HTM4S/ASW825	5750	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker package £2500+ in Awards 2005.	120	88	8	42x24x35	28x49x29	42x24x35	53x53x35	●	3
B&W DM 603 S3 (7 spks)	1850	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Amazes - needs space to be heard at its best.	100	88	8	91x20x29	20x54x31	29x17x22	34x34x41	●	3
B&W DM300 series	900	02.03/FT	★★★★★	A superb set-up but too big for some rooms.	100	88	8	91x20x31	15x42x21	33x20x24	41x33x38	●	2
B&W DM600 series	1000	07.02/ST	★★★★★	A beautiful B&W system and it sounds great.	150	89	8	91x20x29	20x54x31	29x17x22	No	●	3
Canton CD300,360F,AS200SC	2700	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Brings high style to audio's high brow.	170	n/a	4	120x12x16	12x120x16	120x12x16	45x30x47		2
Crane Audio Oceana 3	600	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Polished looks and performance - worth an audition.	100	89	8	91x13x14	49x13x14	25x13x14	25x44x35		Al
Crane Audio Oceana 5	840	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Surprisingly musical for a stylish system.	140	89	8	105x19x20	19x58x20	30x19x20	25x44x35		Al
DALI Concept	1293	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	With punchy electronics it delivers a big sound.	100	87	8	93x20x26	16x50x23	31x17x19	41x38x42		2
DALI Suite	2074	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive package that does many things very well.	80	86	4	88x17x31	16x56x32	33x24x14	41x38x42	●	2
Eltax Summit 5.0/Impact 10	500	04.04/ST	★★★☆☆	A steal but it doesn't hang together too well.	130	87	8	84x21x25	14x36x20	20x14x20	35x35x35	●	Bch
Epos ELS3 5.1	956	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker package under £1000 in Award 2005.	100	87	4	27x17x20	17x51x21	27x17x20	37x34x45		3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 714 system	1326	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Perfect for multichannel music enthusiasts.	90	91	8	90x20x27	15x44x25	30x18x20	34x32x38		3
Heybrook HB3/C1/.5/S200	980	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	Strong value - best with aggresive sounding kit.	90	89	6	90x24x29	18x46x22	30x17x20	42x32x34	●	2
Jamo D7PEX	4499	02.03/FT	★★★★☆	Seven speakers and two subwoofers - good value.	100	87	4	27x59x17	27x59x17	27x51x13	49x59x44		Bk
JPW 203/208/201	457	04.04/ST	★★★☆☆	An assembly of components that fail to enthrall.	60	90	6	85x21x30	18x46x23	26x15x24	No		2
KEF iQ3 AV	1160	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a thoroughly professional sound.	150	88	8	37x22x33	17x51x26	30x18x26	36x50x33	●	4
KEF iQ5 AV	1450	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Hugely competent with both music and movies.	150	83	8	82x18x26	17x51x26	18x36x18	36x50x33	●	5
KEF KHT6000 ACE	1850	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Impressive looks but lacks sonic prowess for the price.	100	87	8	60x12x9	12x58x9	60x12x9	45x60x40		Sl
Linn Komponent	3250	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Neat, good sounding, well thought-out package.	min60	85	6	1001x18x16	18x56x16	25x18x16	14x50dia	●	2
M&K 850THX	3550	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Highly innovative.	200	90	4	41x18x22	18x41x22	88x23x11	47x39x52		3
Mission 78se series	2650	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Highly effective tweaks make the 78-series sing.	150	87	6	80x17x30	17x45x20	28x17x26	34x61x28	●	Ald
Mission Elegante e82	3990	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Best full-size package over £2000 in Awards 2004	150	85	8	96x30x33	17x44x25	28x16x25	42x37x40	●	Gry
Mission m3i Cinema	879	02.05/FT	★★★★★	One of the finest-sounding we've heard at the price.	75	88	8	95x20x30	17x43x23	26x17x28	41x28x50	●	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B2 AV	800	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Integration, crisp detail and lively dynamics.	80	88	6	35x19x25	16x46x16	29x29x13	32x32x34	●	Va
Monitor Audio Bronze B4 AV	950	12.05/GT	★★★★★	You won't run short of thrills with this package.	80	91	6	85x19x26	16x46x16	29x29x13	32x32x34	●	Va
Monitor Audio GR20 AV	2800	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	This is a quality package with plenty of appeal.	100	88	6	93x20x30	20x56x23	23x36x18	n/a	●	4
Monitor Audio Silver RS1 AV	1650	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Class-leading set-up that is worth every penny.	120	89	6	31x19x28	19x50x24	29x29x13	34x34x37	●	5
Monitor Audio Silver RS6AV	1900	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Speaker package Product of the year in Awards 2005	120	89	6	85x19x25	19x50x24	29x29x13	34x34x37	●	5

Monitor Audio Silver RS6AV

Consisting Silver RS6 floorstanders at the front, Silver RS-LCR centre channel, Silver RS-FX surround and the RSW-12 subwoofer – this system will give you truly exceptional sound. Delivery is clean, crisp and unadulterated; it peers deep into DVD soundtracks and uncovers a fantastic level of detail and insight.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SPEAKER PACKAGES
MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV

Mordaunt-Short Avant 5.1	780	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Great-value - builds on strengths of the MS309 sub.	100	87	4	80x17x34	17x49x20	23x22x15	37x37x37		2
Mordaunt-Short Performance	10000	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Deeply impressive, they will leave you breathless.	150	89	4	121x24x37	60x21x22	121x24x37	50x50x50	●	2
Panasonic SBPF80051	1420	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Eye-catching pleasant system that's worth considering.	100	81	6	108x27x28	15x38x21	38x15x21	47x26x47	●	
Quad L Series (12L/11L/Lsub)	1930	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Full-size package Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	150	86	6	33x21x25	31x19x24	33x21x25	53x34x47	●	4
Revel Concerta Package	3100	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Powerful but cultured - demands a big room.	200	87	6	105x22x39	23x53x26	32x36x21	36x34x41	●	3
Ruark Prologue II(7 spk)	3165	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	An appealing solution with extra Epilogue II surrounds	120	87	6	96x21x24	17x45x19	27x19x23	42x43x43	●	4
Tannoy Eyris	2250	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Better for music, including multichannel, than movies	75	88	8	102x20x26	21x43x26	24x28x17	n/a	●	2
Tannoy Sensys 5.1	1200	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	No shortage of ability, or cubic capacity - excellent sub.	110	88	8	91x21x29	21x35x28	35x21x29	32x29x29		3
Triad Silver Series	4180	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for home cinema, but for music it can be beaten	125	83	4	48x22x24	22x48x24	36x34x9	41x40x39		22
ViennaSchonb./Web/Berg/Sub	3700	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish speakers that sound amazingly good.	180	91	4	105x27x9	27x50x9	27x21x9	40x64x22		Al
Wharfedale Diamond 8 Cinema	400	09.01/FT	★★★★★	Look and sound more expensive than they are.	100	86	6	80x21x26	18x45x18	30x20x18	n/a		2
Wharfedale Diamond 9.1AV	910	Awd05/GT	★★★★★	Exciting and great-value, with masses of detail on offer.	100	86	6	30x19x28	19x40x23	30x19x28	42x42x38	●	5
Wharfedale Diamond 9.4AV	995	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	An involving sound but not an all-rounder.	100	86	6	80x22x30	19x40x23	30x19x28	42x42x38	●	5
Wharfedale Evolution Cinema	1150	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Great - add a subwoofer and you're in business.	100	88	6	88x23x40	17x42x30	37x35x16	n/a	●	Va

PC & MP3 speakers

Add surround sound to your PC, MP3 or games console

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest Imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Sub	Biwire	Finishes
Altec Lansing 5100	100	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Check it out if you're not bothered about low-end grunt.	73	70	4	18x6x6	7x16x5	18x6x6	30x17x34		Al
Altec Lansing inMotion iM3	140	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Jack of all trades iPod system - decent sound.	A4	-	-	20x14x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Altec Lansing inMotion iM7	200	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Buy for big bass and party-starting performance.	A25+A25	-	-						Wt/Sl
Altec Lansing inMotion iMini	110	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Inoffensive offering for iPod Mini owners.	A4	-	8	11x18x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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PC & MP3 speakers continued...

Add surround sound to your PC, MP3 or games console

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest Imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Sub	Biwire	Finishes
Bose SoundDock	249	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Ultra-stylish - the most refined iPod dock around.	n/a	-	-	30x17x16(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Creative TravelSound 400	50	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Sound entertaining rather than polished.	2x2	-	-	7x16x4					Sl/Bk
Eclipse TD TD307 PAWH	400	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Stunning sonic image when used with an MP3 player.	12/A12	80	8	12x16x16	-	-	14x15x15		3
Intempo iDS-01	40	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent debut into the iPod accessory market.	6	-	-	23x12x9(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
JBL Encounter	99	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best MP3 speaker system in Awards 2005.	A13/A34	-	-	15x9dia	-	-	25x7dia		Wt
JBL On Stage	130	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Eye-catching iPod speaker system - decent sound.	A6	-	-	18x18x5(unit)					Wt
JBL On Tour	70	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Boombox affair for use with MP3s, CD and computers.	A3	-	-	4x18x9	-	-	-		Wt
Logic3 iStation	60	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	An iPod docking station - decent stereo/sub solution.	A6/A6	-	-	14x20x4(unit)	-	-	inc		Wt
Logitech mm50	100	12.05/GT	★★★★★	The best budget dock we've tested to date.									
Monitor Audio i-deck	250	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best iPod audio dock in Awards 2005. Great sounding.	A18	87	-	19x44x15(unit)	-	-	-		Wt/Gry

Monitor Audio i-deck

Excellent any-room companion for your iPod – the main unit docks your iPod and its 18w per channel amplifier powers the supplied stereo speakers. This is the most convincing iPod docking speaker system we've heard yet. Its spacious sound, which rivals leading micro systems, goes loud – very loud.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
MP3 PLAYERS & ACCESSORIES
MONITOR AUDIO I-DECK

PodGear Pocket Party	25	08.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Super-light iPod travel speaker - could excel in a tent.	1	-	-	2.9x8x2.9	-	-	-		Wt
PodGear Shuffle Station	35	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	For Shuffle owners - affordable, but it's no stunner.	3	-	4	16x10x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Saitek A-200	80	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Clever, distinctive looking unit for MP3, PSP and PC.	A3	-	-	21x15x23	-	-	-		Bk
Trust 4500P	50	06.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Spend more and spare yourself the sonic experience.	15	-	-	16x10x10	16x10x10	16x10x10	18x19x31		Bk

Home cinema in a box (with DVD)

Instant surround sound solutions for maximum convenience and style

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	PLAYS DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	SURROUND MODES Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Bose Lifestyle 18	1750	11.03/FT	★★★☆☆	We like it, but the performance is around for less.	200			●											●	●	●		8
Denon D-M51DVS	500	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Likeable 2.1 system, commendable in Dolby Virtual mode.	2x35/A100			●	●	●									●		●	●	2
Denon DHT-500SD	500	10.05/GT	★★★★★	All-in-one system Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	6x100			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2
Denon DHT-550SD	750	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Doesn't quite justify the extra £250 over the DHT-500SD.	6x100			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	19
Denon Smart Life S-101	850	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Appealing - movie surround sound without all the boxes.	2x50/A100			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	3/1
Denon Smart Life S-301	1250	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Best home cinema in a box over £1000 in Awards 2005.	2x70/A140	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●	●	1/2
JBL DSC 1000	400	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent sonically, but delivers a disappointing picture.	5x50/A100	●		●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	2
JVC EX-A1	400	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Compact solution for smaller rooms - decent sonic delivery.	2x30			●											●	●		●	2
JVC EX-D5	400	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Works handsomely where surround sound isn't craved.	2x18	●		●		●									●	●	●		2/1
KEF KIT 100	999	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Chic system with effective surround sound.	4x40/60			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	3/1
Linn Classik Movie Di	2500	02.03/GT	★★★☆☆	This is a neat solution, but limited video performance.	40x5			●				●							●	●	●	●	10
Nakamichi SoundSpace 8 1/2	2599	01.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable of good results - but it's far from cheap.	5x10			●				●							●	●	●		5
Panasonic SC-HT880	500	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good picture but sound and build don't justify the price.	1000	●		●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	1
Panasonic SCHT530	199	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Cheap, one-box solution that is a worthy four star recipient.	600	●			●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	2
Philips LX7500R	550	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best home cinema in a box £500-£1000 in Awards 2005.	5x100			●		●		●								●	●	●	2
Roadstar TVD5004(portable)	200	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Boombox packed with features including a mini-TV - flawed.	2x2.5			●															0

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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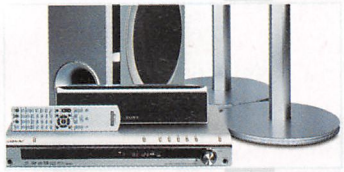
Home cinema in a box (with DVD)

Instant surround sound solutions for maximum convenience and style

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	PLAYS: DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Sony DAV-DZ500F	449	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Best home cinema in a box under £500 in Awards 2005.	5x143/A285		●	●	●	●		●								●		●	2



Sony DAV-DZ500F

Sonically and visually this is a barnstoring performer, which coupled with Sony's trademark usability and appealing design makes this a stunning system. Unlike some budget systems, this system produces a brilliant picture that will give bags of pleasure and sonically it has the balance of a gymnast, and the agility, too.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS
BEST HOME CINEMA IN A BOX UNDER £500
SONY DAV-DZ500F

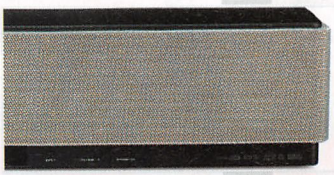
Sony DAV-X1	900	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Makes sense as a 2.1 system - sound doesn't surround.	2x21/20/60		●	●	●	●		●								●			●	1/1
Tatung THT5150S	149	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Massively impressive for the price - very enjoyable system.	350			●				●									●	●	●	6
TEAC DV-L800/AG-L800	900	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	Looks good, but it is no advance on cheaper rivals.	6x50			●				●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●	6
TEAC Legacy 700/LS-L800	1100	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Awards 2003. Great all-round.	30x5/A100			●		●		●							●	●	●	●	●	8
TEAC Legacy 800/LS-L800	1300	Awd03/FT	★★★★☆	Cracking system with the right mix of style and substance.	5x50			●				●							●		●			8
Technics SC-DV290	500	09.04/ST	★★☆☆☆	Mini-system that happens to play DVDs - acts like one too.	5x35	●		●		●	●								●		●	●		
Yamaha DVX-S200	450	09.04/ST	★★★★★	Excellent sound and progressive scan pictures.	5x100		●	●		●		●				●			●	●	●	●	●	2

Home cinema in a box

Surround sound add-ons for those who already own a DVD player

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS NEO:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Acoustic Energy Aego P5 MkII	500	08.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Admirable performer but it doesn't look like good value.	125	●											3
Creative Inspire T7900	100	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Good in parts - musically hit and miss but good for games.	6x8/1x20												1
Klegg M6-501P	549	04.03/GT	★★★☆☆	The Klegg is a sexy decoder/speaker package, but not ideal for long-term.	5x30												5
Klegg M8 501	700	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Comprehensive and competent package with good power and drive.	5x100	●											5
Spherex Xbox 5.1	400	03.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Ideal for keen gamers. Fantastic spread of sound but it lacks all round ability.	300	●											4
Yamaha AV57	200	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Cracking value for money if you're looking for your first foray into home cinema.	5x105	●		●	●	●			●	●			2/6
Yamaha YSP-1	800	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Digital Sound Projector. Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	40x2/2x20	●			●								4
Yamaha YSP-800	600	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Digital Sound Projector. Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	21x2/2x20	●			●				●				1/5



Yamaha YSP-800

An ingenious design – Yamaha's digital sound projector uses a total of 23 drivers to amplify multichannel surround sound from just one box. Refreshingly it couldn't be simpler to operate, as after entering basic room details all you do is hit the remote and automated calibration does it all for you.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TECHNOLOGY
YAMAHA DIGITAL SOUND PROJECTORS

Yamaha YSP-800/YST-FSW100	750	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Sound projector and subwoofer - ingenious and well executed.	2x21/2x20/60	●			●						●									2/1

Widescreen TVs

Conventional TVs that offer great performance and value

BUDGET Up to £5500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	DECODING: Intergrated digital	Dolby Digital	DTS	Pro Logic II	Pro Logic	Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Phono out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Goodmans GTV69RF2	350	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Overall, a very competitive television for the money.	28								●	●					79x57x50	41
Goodmans GTV69W2DT	330	10.04/ST	★★★★☆	Sensibly priced integrated digital TV.	28							●	●			●			78x53x47	34
Loewe Aconda 9381HD/DR+	1900	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best CRT TV/recorder combination in Awards 2004.	32								●	●	●	●	●	●	63x86x58	55
Loewe Mimo 32	1350	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Unusual design, as much about performance as looks.	32								●						61x81x57	60.5
Loewe Nemos 32	1299	01.05/ST	★★★★☆	Not cheap, but a hugely desirable and flexible package.	32								●	●		●	●		60x90x55	57
Panasonic TX-32DTM1	700	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best CRT TV in Awards 2005. An outstanding picture.	32	●							●	●		●	●		69x101x70	52

Panasonic TX-32DTM1

CRT technology is still live and kicking in this TV – the picture is simply sublime, it produces clear and lucid images and even the standard analogue picture startles with its billiance, putting any flatscreen to shame. Overall, the TX-32DTM1 offers exceptional value and an outstanding picture – for a big lad.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
TELEVISIONS
BEST CRT TV
PANASONIC TX32DTM1

Sagem Axium	2800	UTV04	★★★☆☆	Consider for maximum screen area for your money.	50						●		●	●	●	●		●	90x116x37	42
Thomson 32WH403S	439	UTV04	★★★☆☆	Powerful sound but there are better - tested at £700.	32								●						90x56x56	56
Toshiba 32YT56B	550	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Impressive analogue tuner but Freeview picture is poor.	32	●							●	●		●	●		56x91x54	61
Toshiba 32ZH46	549	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Sleek, capable performer at an enticing price.	32								●			●	●		55x74x55	50
Toshiba 36ZP48	1699	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Big picture but hasn't got unrivalled quality on its side.	36		●				●	●	●	●		●			86x114x60	76

Plasma TVs

Slimline, stylish televisions available in huge screen sizes

BUDGET Up to £6000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Integrated tuner	Resolution (wd)	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimensions (hwd)	Weight (kg)
Fujitsu P42HHA40	2695	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid plasma and good value since the price came down.	42		1024x1024	●	●		●	●	●	●	64x103x9	29.5
Fujitsu P55XHA40	5995	UGHD.05	★★★★☆	Impressive neat, simple design - staggeringly good with HDTV.	55		1368x768	●	●				●	●	137x81x12	55

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Plasma TVs continued...

Slimline, stylish televisions available in huge screen sizes

BUDGET Up to £6000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Integrated tuner	Resolution (wd)	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimensions (hwd)	Weight (kg)
Hitachi 42PD5200	1900	07.04/ST	★★★★☆	Outstanding value - great specifications and performance.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	103x64x9	35
Hitachi 42PD7200	2500	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	HD-ready screen delivers a brilliant image - a very good buy.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x105x10	37
Hitachi 42PD7500	2500	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent HD-Ready plasma - solid TV and DVD picture.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x105x11	37
Hitachi 55PMA550E	6000	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent choice if you want a TV screen this big.	55		1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	86x139x11	63.5
LG RZ60PY10	8000	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Gargantuan and it looks gorgeous but the performance is poor.	60	●	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	93x171x32	86
LG Electronics 42PX4DV	1800	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid product at the right price - lustrous picture quality.	42	●	852x480	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x125x9	45.3
Loewe Articos 55 (rear-proj)	4750	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Rear-projection DLP TV - highly impressive in every sense.	55	●	1280x720	●	●	●		●	●	●	103x117x55	80
Loewe Xelos A42	3499	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Possibly the best sounding plasma we've ever heard.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●		●	●	●	74x107x11	40
NEC 42XR3	2995	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Authoritative picture performance but no tuner or scart.	42		1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x102x9	29.5
Panasonic TH-37PW7	1860	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Solid, stylish, if unspectacular piece of kit.	37		852x480			●					55x92x9	24
Panasonic TH-42PV500	2500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Breathtaking picture quality via HDMI - matching rack £500.	42	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	84x133x14	40
Panasonic TH37PV500	2300	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best 36-40in flatscreen TV in Awards 2005. Future-proof.	37	●	1024x720	●	●		●	●	●	●	67x104x14	35
Pioneer PDP-435FDE	2750	10.04/FT	★★★☆☆	A let down, it lacks the hoped-for visual sparkle (was £3700).	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x112x9	26.8
Pioneer PDP-435XDE	3000	02.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning design and peerless pictures via the HDMI input.	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x112x9	27
Pioneer PDP-436XDE	2800	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best 40in+ flatscreen TV in Awards 2005.	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	63x108x9	26

Pioneer PDP-436XDE

Pioneer's latest, sixth generation of plasma panel is a terrific set: for colour brilliance, image sharpness and vibrancy it takes your breath away. It looks good even with off-air TV: feed it a scaled DVD signal, or some High Def video, and it's jaw-dropping. Even the optional speakers sound good.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
TELEVISIONS
BEST 40IN+ FLATSCREEN TV
PIONEER PDP-436XDE

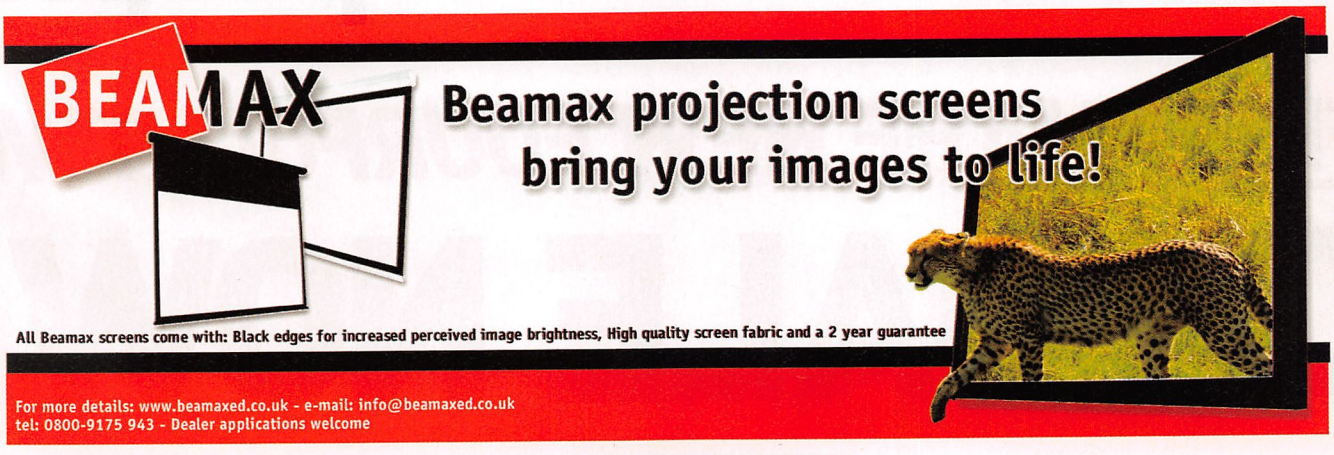
Pioneer PDP-505XDE	4000	08.05/FT	★★★★★	If you've the room, this'll make every DVD a real viewing 'event'.	50	●	1280x768			●	●		●	●	74x127x9	32.8
Sagem Axium HD-D45(rear-proj)	1999	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	DLP rear projection TV - big-screen action at an affordable price.	45		1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	106x79x37	28
Sagem Axium HD-D56	2700	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	If you want a super-sized TV at a reasonable price take a look.	56	●	1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	110x143x60	37
Samsung SP50L7HX (rear-proj)	3500	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Fantastic value DLP rear-projection TV - outstanding with DVD.	50	●	1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●		61x90x53	57
SIM2 Domino 55M	4000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent big screen - wonderful with both Hi-Def and DVD.	55		1280x720	●	●		●	●	●	●	98x132x41	54
SIM2 RTX55H(rear-projection)	7000	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Rear-projection DLP TV - possibly the world's best big-screen TV.	55	●	1280x720	●	●		●	●	●		122x150x42	85
ThemeScene RD50(rear-proj)	2000	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Rear-projection DLP TV - great value supersize television.	50	●	1280x720	●		●	●	●	●		90x117x38	41
Thomson 50DLY644 (rear-proj)	3000	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Great idea undermined by poor execution - shop elsewhere.	50	●	1280x720	●	●	●			●	●	99x119x42	46.3
Yamaha PDM-4210	3995	07.04/ST	★★★★☆	Fine performer in every sense - in the upper echelon of plasmas.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	64x103X9	35.2

LCD TVs

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
B&O BeoVision 6-22	2615	UTV04	★★★★☆	Expensive but utterly gorgeous piece of vision kit.	22	16:9	1280x720			●				●	59x48x16	18
B&O BeoVision 6-26	3250	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Good picture and sound but it carries a hefty price tag.	26	15:9	1280x720			●				●	58x71x18	24
B&O BeoVision 7	5995	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Amazing - sublime picture, impressive sound and looks.	32	16:9	1366x768			●					57x88x16	30
Beko 17WLB450S	250	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent for this price, but it's not comfortable with motion.	17	16:9	1280x1024			●	●		●		37x54x9	6
Bush LCD27TV005	599	08.05/ST	★★★☆☆	You can't be too harsh at this price but don't expect miracles.	27	16:9	1280x768				●		●	●	50x78x21	13
Daewoo DSL17D3	330	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Decent TV picture and you're on to a winner with DVD playback.	17	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		31x54x6	5
Goodmans GLCD17DVB	350	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	If you want Freeview this will do the job but the picture is poor.	17	4:3	1280x1024			●	●		●		42x41x8	7



RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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LCD TVs continued...

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Hitachi 17LD4220	390	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Strong performer that boasts good picture and sound.	17	16:9	1280x768			●	●		●		37x45x18	7
Hitachi 32LD7200	1500	11.05/ST	★★★★☆	HD-ready and performs well in all the right places.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	55x84x12	18
Humax LGB-26DTT	1500	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Give this serious consideration if you see it at a better price.	26	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	54x70x23	23
JVC LT-32D50	1800	04.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Decent performance but it can't justify its price.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	64x83x30	19.8
JVC LT-32DS6	2000	11.05/ST	★★★★☆	Good looking set - great with DVD and high def content.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x80x23	20
LG LG32LP1D	1700	11.05/ST	★★★☆☆	LG's feature-laden set is a bold move, but its picture is less so.	32	16:9	1366x768	●		●	●	●	●	●	61x81x34	20
LG RZ32LZ50	999	04.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Underwhelming performer, there are too many flaws.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●		59x88x12	
Loewe Concept L32	1800	11.05/ST	★★★★★	Excels using High-Definition or even regular DVD sources.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	48x97x12	16.5
Loewe Spheros 37 HD/DR+	3299	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Very tempting - this version has a hard disk recorder/internet.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x99x9	31
Loewe Spheros R37 Masterpiece	5500	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive, but a fine performer and great long-term investment.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	106x99x8.8	67
Loewe Xelos A26	1500	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Fine sounding and outstanding pictures - High-Def-ready.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	52x70x12	14
Loewe Xelos SL 37HD/DR+	3299	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Potential for lots of extras in one TV including a hard-disk.	37	16:9	1366X768	●	●	●	●	●	●		68x99x9	22
Loewe Xelos SL20	799	06.04/ST	★★★★☆	Bit of a head-turner in both design and performance stakes.	20	4:3	640x480			●				●	54x54x26	9
Panasonic TX-32LXD50	1800	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Terrific proposition spoiled by not having an HDMI input.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●		●	●	●	●	80x57x14	21
Panasonic TX26LXD500	1500	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Best 26-30in flatscreen TV in Award 2005.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	56x86x30	21
Panasonic TX32LXD500	1800	11.05/ST	★★★★★	Great picture, including class-leading black definition.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	56x86x14	20.5
Philips 17PF9946	700	12.04/ST	★★★★☆	Gorgeous aesthetics and the picture quality is good.	17	16:9	1280x768			●	●		●	●	45x33x18	5
Philips 26PF9946	900	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Performance and price make it an ideal second-room screen.	26	16:9	1280-768			●	●		●	●	43x69x24	11
Philips 32PF9830	2000	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Flatscreen TV Product of the year in Awards 2005.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x100x10	20

Philips 32PF9830

A sublime 32in LCD TV - even the most ardent CRT TV fans will be bowled over by this stunning set. Its incredible depth of field helps images leap athletically from the screen, while excellent contrast levels result in a CRT-challenging picture. The sound is also above average, too, thanks to the NXT speakers.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TELEVISIONS
PHILIPS 32PF9830

Philips 32PF9986	2500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best LCD/plasma TV 30-36in in Awards 2004. Now £500 less.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x100x10	20
Philips 37PF9830	2800	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Includes a motorised stand and looks great with High-def.	37	16:9	1920x1080	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	113x10x68	27
Philips 37PF9986	4000	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	The high price and some picture problems mean it's outgunned.	37	16:9	1366 x 768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x113x10	27
Philips 42PF9986	6000	Awd04/FT	★★★☆☆	Big on screen size but small on performance.	42	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●			●	76x124x10	35
Sagem Axium HD-L27	999	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Future-proof, it looks the part and performs well.	26	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	45x88x14	15
Sagem HD-L32	1200	11.05/ST	★★★★☆	Gives you a lot for your money including an HDMI input.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	56x104x14	24.5
Samsung LW32A33W	1500	04.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Attractive price but the picture quality is mediocre.	32	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	61x86x33	23
Sanyo 23LC4 'Nicolas'	650	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Hit-and-miss - looks good but its performance is not.	23	16:9	1280x720			●	●			●	48x58x26	n/a
Sharp Aquos LC32P50E	1000	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Unusual but effective set - truly outstanding with standard TV.	32	16:9	960x540			●		●	●	●	80x64x29	16
Sharp LC-45GD1E	5500	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great looking and scintillating performance with HD video.	45	16:9	1920x1080	●	●	●		●	●	●	65x108x9	22.4
Sony KDLV32A12U	1800	11.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Beautiful looks and set-up for HD TV - performance disappoints.	32	16:9	136x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x81x32	24.5
Sony KLVS19A10U	700	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Lovely in many ways - one of the best Sony LCDs we've seen.	19	15:9	1280x768	●	●	●		●			36x47x8	7.0
Thomson 20LCDM03B	529	06.04/ST	★★★★☆	Clean image with DVD playback, struggles with movement.	20	4:3	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	49x51x7	11
Thomson 27LCDB03B	989	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Useful range of features, shame the picture quality isn't better.	27	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	48x83x21	17
Thomson 30LCDB03	1179	11.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Not worth considering unless you are going to watch DVDs only.	30	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	53x89x22	19.8
Toshiba 32WL56	1199	11.05/ST	★★★★★	If your budget is limited this is cracking value for money.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	58x80x10	17.5
Toshiba 37WL56	1999	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Very solid LCD buy - and fine value, too	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●		●		66x91x11	24.9
ViewSonic N2750W	699	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Keenly priced and extremely capable but no DVI/HDMI sockets.	27	16:9	1280x720			●	●	●	●	●	50x78x21	13
ViewSonic N3200W	1049	04.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Seductively priced and picture performance is acceptable.	32	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		64x105x22	22.5

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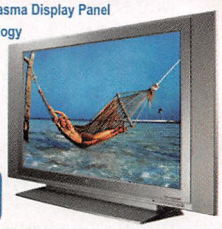

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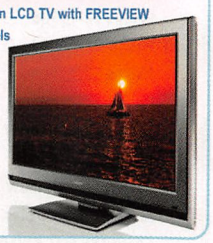

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Panasonic TX-26/32LXD500
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- FREEVIEW
- SD Card Slot

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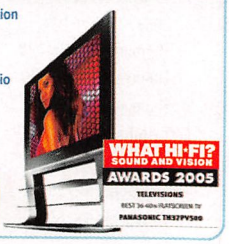

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PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Type	Aspect ratio	Max screen (in)	Throw ratio	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	DVI-D	HDMI	Weight (kg)
BenQ PE5120	499	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	It's not perfect but it's well worth shortlisting.	DLP	16:9	300	1.64-2.37	●	●		●	●	●			3.0
BenQ PE7700	1679	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Projector Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	300	1.18-1.61	●	●		●	●	●		●	5.5

BenQ PE7700

Startling product with ridiculously good picture performance, including HD-Ready support, for a very modest price. Via DVD the detail is excellent and images remain stable, but whack in some high-def video and the image really flies. It is easy to set up and use, too, with neat on-screen graphics and a backlit remote.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
PROJECTORS
BENQ PE7700

Digital Proj iVision HD Digital	6995	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking - small fuss-free and a superb picture.	DLP	16:9	217	1.75-2.25	●	●		●	●	●	●		3
Epson EMP-TW500	2499	09.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine in almost every way but doesn't rival DLPs.	LCD	16:9	300	1.85 - 2.69	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	6.2
Hitachi PJ-TX100	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent performance for an LCD design.	LCD	16:9	300	1.75-2.42	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		4.4
HP ep7122	799	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Much to admire and it's a breeze to set up.	DLP	4:3	290	-	●	●		●	●	●	●		5.7
Marantz VP-10S1	23000	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Amazing reference-quality image from this giant.	DLP	16:9	300	3 lens opt	●	●		●	●	●	●		41
NEC HT1100	3049	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent, comes close to the class leaders.	DLP	4:3	300	1.7-2.0	●	●	●	●	●	●			3.2
Optoma H27	699	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Belies its price tag with a great performance.	DLP	16:9	241	1.87-2.25	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	2.5
Optoma Movietime	850	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Projector DVD combo - quality isn't quite there.	DLP	16:9	359	1.26-1.41			●	●		●			3.5
Panasonic PT-AE700	1700	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very good, very quiet and very flexible.	LCD	16:9	200	1.2-7.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	3.6
Panasonic PT-LM2	699	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but it won't set the world on fire.	LCD	4:3	300	1.74-1.81	●	●	●		●	●			1.6
Runco Reflection CL-510	5995	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Well worth the money if you can afford it.	DLP	16:9	200	1.75-2.00	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		10
Sagem MDP 1600	799	06.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	Despite its price this is far from good value.	DLP	4:3	276	n/a				●		●			1.9
ScreenPlay 4800	800	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Impressive picture and specs for the price.	DLP	4:3	n/a	1.89-2.27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2.9
ScreenPlay 4805	799	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Best projector under £1000 in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	120	1.77-2.13	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	3.0
ScreenPlay 5700	1999	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Projector Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9	n/a	1.89-2.63	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.2
ScreenPlay 7205	2799	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best projector £3000-£5000 in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9		1.67-2.08	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.3
ScreenPlay 7210	3499	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best projector £2000-£4000 in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	132	1.67-2.08	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.3
ScreenPlay 777	9999	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Improved 777 - better, cheaper and still sexy.	DLP	16:9	180	7 lens opt	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	20.2
Sharp XV-Z12000	5600	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent performance in every regard.	DLP	16:9	300	1.8-2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	9.4
Sharp XV-Z2000	3000	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	High-quality projector - excellent resolution.	DLP	16:9	300	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		4.2
SIM2 C3X LITE	10995	11.05/FT	★★★★★	The biggest leap forward since the birth of DLP.	DLP	16:9	300	1.5-2.0	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	8.8
SIM2 Domino 20-H	2999	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Terrific performer but rivals cost less.	DLP	16:9	300	2.2-3.1	●	●		●	●	●		●	5.0
SIM2 Domino 30-H	4000	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Ice-cool looks belie its red-hot performance.	DLP	16:9	300	1.8-2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	5.0
SIM2 HT 300 E	6000	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Best projector over £4000 in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	250	1.8-2.4	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	5.8
ThemeScene H30A	995	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Delivers a terrific picture for its modest price.	DLP	16:9	330	1.65-2.0	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2.0
ThemeScene H57	1799	03.05/FT	★★★★★	High-quality widescreen at a very modest price.	DLP	16:9	246	1.6-1.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	3.4
ThemeScene H77	3500	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive specification for the price.	DLP	16:9	283	1.6-2.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		7.5
ThemeScene H79	3000	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Terrific - it's the equal of many pricier designs.	DLP	16:9	283	1.6-2.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		7.5
Toshiba MT200	999	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good, solid offering but competition is strong.	DLP	16:9	290	1.87-2.25	●	●		●	●		●	●	3
Toshiba MT700	2500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Diverting, but it's up against tough competition.	DLP	16:9	300	1.3-1.8	●	●			●	●		●	4.5
ViewSonic PJ552	699	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a sharp picture in spite of LCD flaws.	LCD	4:3	300	1.5-1.8	●	●	●	●	●	●			6.3
Yamaha DPX-1200	8000	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive projector - shame about the price.	DLP	16:9	200	1.0-1.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	13.8
Yamaha LPX-510	3500	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	User-friendly and would suit a small room.	LCD	16:9	300	1.35-2.03	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	4.8

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★★★★☆ Very good
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The fabulous new n-VI will be available from November and features integrated DVD, DVD-A, CD, Audio preamp 5 channel power amp and an optional FM/DAB tuner. A video scaler module will be available 2006. With Dolby DTS & Pro logic 11 coupled with HCDP enabled DVI output, this high spec great sounding one box unit will truly make you the n-VI of your friends. Come & Listen.

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- ✓ Multi-room integration via Knekt
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The new Linn Komponent system is available for audition now. This system must be installed - call for details

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PRODUCT RANGE

Arcam ✳ AVI ✳ B&W ✳ Denon ✳ Epos ✳ KEF Linn ✳ Naim ✳ PMC ✳ ProAc ✳ Project ✳ Pure Pioneer ✳ Quad ✳ REL ✳ Rotel ✳ Spendor Sennheiser ✳ Sugden ✳ Vibe ✳ Yamaha

THE A LIST

Denon DM33/SCM51 CD System £249.00
Arcam DiVA CD73T CD Player £399.00
Arcam DiVA CD192T CD Player ***NEW!*** £849.00
Arcam FMJ DV29 DVD HDMI Player £1599.00
Linn Exotik Preamp ***NEW!*** £1750.00
Linn Classik Music System £799.00
Linn C2100 Chakra Power Amp ***NEW!*** £1400.00
Naim CDX2 CD Player £2750.00
Naim Nait 5i Amplifier £699.00
Naim NAC 202 Preamp £1375.00
Naim NAP 200 Power Amp £1345.00
Pure DRX 701ES DAB Tuner £189.00
Rotel RA-03 Amplifier £499.00
Pro-ject Debut III MM inc Arm/Cart £135.00
Goldring GR2 Turntable ic arm £265.00
B&W 805s Speakers (800 series) £1600.00
B&W M1/PV1 5 Speaker+Sub £1575.00
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ProAc Studio 140 Speakers ***NEW!*** £1395.00
PMC GB! Speakers £1145.00
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Arcam FMJ CD33 CD Player (was 1349) .. **£795.00**
Arcam DT81 DAB Radio Tuner (was 649) .. **£299.00**
Arcam AVR200 Receiver S/H (was 799) **£499.00**
AVI Pro 9 Cherry Speakers (was 799) **£399.00**
AVI Lab S21MC CD Player (was 1400) **£849.00**
Denon 1400 Multi-Format Player (was399) **£219.00**
Denon AVR 3805 AV Receiver (was 999) .. **£499.00**
KEF KHT 1005 Sub-Sat Syatem (was 299) **£199.00**
KEF Q Compact Speakers (was 199) **£99.00**
KEF Q1 Speakers - Maple (was 249) **£149.00**
KEF Q4 Speakers - Cherry (was 399) **£199.00**
Linn Unidisk SC M/F Player (was 2995) .. **£2295.00**
Linn Kairn Phono Preamp (was1850) **£795.00**
Linn 5103 AV Processor Blk (new 4500) .. **£950.00**
Linn Majik Amplifier Blk (was 945) **£375.00**
Linn LK100 Power Amp S/H (new 650.00) .. **£399.00**
Linn 2250 Power Amp - Silver (was 1995) **£1195.00**
Linn Trikan Centre Spkr - Maple (was 495) **£249.00**
Naim NAC112 Preamp S/H (new 660) **£425.00**
Naim NAC 102 Preamp S/H (new 1175) .. **£499.00**
Naim NAP 180 P/Amp S/H (new 1200) .. **£695.00**
Rotel RA-01 Amplifier S/H (new 249) **£159.00**
Sugden A21a Amplifier (was 945) **£659.00**
Yamaha HD1300 Disk CD System (was599) **£429.00**
REL Q100e Subwoofer Blk (was 823) **£199.00**
Yamaha DSP AX640se AV Amp (was 399) **£219.00**

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Digital TV tuners

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PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Freeview/Sky Recorder	RGB Scart out	RGB Scart in	Component out	Analogue out	Digital out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Bush DFTA1000 iDaptor	50	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Novel welcome addition to the market - Freeview in a small Scart connector.	F		●				2.6x7.5x10	86
Bush DFTA3	60	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Doesn't boast good enough picture performance or level of dependability to impress.	F		●	●			3x25x14	0.6
DigiFusion FVRT200	180	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Best Freeview PVR in Awards 2005. Startling image quality and great features.	F	●	●	●			36x24x5	2.3

DigiFusion FVRT200

Great piece of equipment – it's fitted with an 80GB hard disk recorder and a pair of built-in tuners, so you have some really flexible recording options. The picture quality is class-leading – images are well defined, and boast crisp edges that maintain their focus even on fast-moving objects. We can heartily recommend it.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
DVD & HARD-DISK RECORDERS
BEST FREEVIEW PVR
DIGIFUSION FVRT200

Goodmans GDB5	80	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Includes a DAB radio but the overall performance isn't up to the best.	F		●	●			9x40x30	2.2
Humax F2-FOX-T	80	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Combines impressive performance with a tidy and user-friendly design.	F		●	●	●	●	4x22x16	1.0
Humax PVR-8000T-80	169	01.05/FT	★★★☆☆	The original 40GB has a much better picture than its 80GB successor.	F	●	●	●	●		6x37x26	2.7
Humax PVR-9200T	250	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Great value - superbly equipped, including a 160GB hard disk, and enjoyable to use.	F	●	●	●		●	7x38x28	3.7
Inverto IDL7000T	240	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Much to praise but the picture isn't quite good enough - includes an 80GB hard disk.	F	●	●	●	●	●	42x30x7	3.0
Nokia 221T	130	01.04/GT	★★★★★	The innovative design looks different but the Nokia has competitive performance.	F		●	●	●	●	13x25x28	1.05
Panasonic TU-CTH100	250	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Worthy of your attention, especially if you want a digital audio output.	F	●	●	●	●	●	8x35x30	n/a
Philips DTR320	60	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Decent performer at an attractive price - fully deserves a strong four stars.	F		●	●	●	●	5x17x26	n/a
Pioneer DBR-TF100	100	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Fine performance with a few extra frills for an affordable price.	F		●	●		●	5x26x19	1.1
Sagem 7280T	100	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Smartly styled, with an 80GB hard disk and it has Top Up TV compatibility.	F	●	●	●		●	32x23x5	1.7
Sagem ITD66	70	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good pictures at a reasonable price mean this Sagen's definitely worth a look.	F		●	●	●	●	22x14x3.5	0.4
Sagem ITD72	60	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Competition is tight, though the feature count could mean it appeals to some.	F		●	●		●	4x22x14	400
Sky Sky+	99	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subscription PVR in Awards 2005. Watch and record satellite television.	S	●	●	●	●		7x38x24	4.5
Sony VTX-D800	100	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent value - style, simplicity of use and a great picture, make this a fine box.	F		●	●	●	●	22x5x24	1.5
Thomson DHD4000	175	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Useful features and a solid performance make this digibox/hard disk worth a look.	F	●	●		●	●	5x36x23	2.5
Thomson DTI2300	80	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Digital tuner with a card slot for Top Up TV - can't deliver the highest quality.	F		●		●	●	4x25x15	0.7
Topfield TF5800PVR	279	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Great spec - twin tuners and 160GB hard-drive recorder - let down by poor picture.	F	●	●		●	●	6x34x27	4.2

Video cables

Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	Scart	Component	DVI-D	HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Directional	Add. cost, £/m
Atlas Element	60	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant cable and the image is rich and detail levels are high.			●			1.0	●					
Audioquest CinQuest S-1 S-Video	70	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	A great cable - dynamic images with strong contrasts and good edge definition.	●					1.0	●					
Audioquest DV-1	270	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Extremely solid performer that presents an accurate and detailed image.				●		15	●					14
Audioquest G-Scart	57	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	The picture is fantastic and sound performance is great considering the price.		●				1.0	●				●	16
Audioquest HDMI-3	280	07.05/FT	★★★★★	The true value of this cable shines in use - it's pricey, but worth the outlay.					●	2.0	●	●				
Chord Company Component	99	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Image quality is excellent: details are handled well and colours are natural.			●			1.0	●				●	10
Chord Company Scart	109	01.02/FT	★★★★★	Superb Scart for composite video and audio - RGB version should be even better.		●				1.0	●					16
Chord Company Scart (RGB)	129	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Pricey and only justifiable in a high-quality system, but worth the money anyway.		●				1.0	●				●	10
Chord Company SI Plus (HDMI)	80	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best digital video cable in Awards 2004. Great value for money.		●			●	1.5	●	●				
Chord Company SI S-Video	60	05.02/FT	★★★★☆	One of the best S-Video cables around, but ensure the rest of your kit is up to it.	●	●				1.0	●	●			●	8
Ecosse HDMI	129	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Longer length, but it leaves traces of noise on-screen - good detail doesn't save it.					●	5.0	●					
Ecosse Prisma	50	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Flexible and easy to handle, colours and overall contrast are very good.			●			1.0	●					

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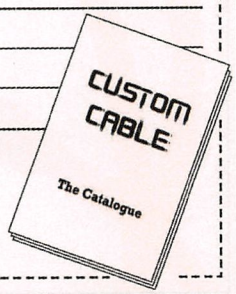

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/ST= Supertest
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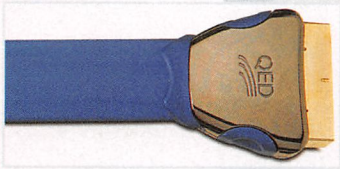
Video cables continued...

Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	TYPE: Scart	TYPE: Component	TYPE: DVI-D	TYPE: HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	Directional	Add. cost, £/m
Gefen CAB-HDMI	40	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fine performer which manages to present a vivid and entertaining picture.					●	3	●					
Ixos XFV05-300	30	07.04/GT	★★★☆☆	A cut above its other budget rivals but this DVI offering is only an average one.				●		3	●					5
Ixos XHT458	80	10.05/FT	★★★★★	One of the smartest cables we've seen and is also a solid performer.					●	1.0	●					
Ixos XHT601-150	40	03.04/GT	★★★★★	A superb cable with great images, but we'd go for the Award-winning XHT611.		●				1.5	●					
Ixos XHT611-075	40	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2003. Flat cable and sockets - brilliant picture and sound.		●				0.75	●					
Ixos XHT801-150	70	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Old-skool looker - its specialities are detail retrieval and picture stability.		●				1.0	●				●	
Ixos XHV601	50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Light years better than freebie Scarts, but it is not a class leader.		●				1.5	●					
Ixos XHV704-300	50	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	If you need a three-metre run this well-made cable is an affordable solution.			●			3.0	●					
Ixos XHV804-100	70	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent fine detail even in complex scenes and impressive blacks			●			1.0	●				●	
Ixos XHV904-100	100	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Vivid colours but rather overdone - clarity and sharpness suffer.			●			1.0	●					Inc
Kimber HDMI	93	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Reproduction of colours is bright and vivid without ever being brash.					●	1.0	●	●				Inc
Kimber Scart RGB	109	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Premium-quality cable at a premium price, but it's a stunning performer.		●				0.75	●				●	44
Lektropacks HCSL14	15.25	03.99/GT	★★★★★	Great value - looks great and sounds excellent with bags of muscularity.		●				1.5				●		
Molex DVI-D	9.50	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Cheap and cheerful, it offers decent performance. A fair starter buy, but no more.				●		2	●					
Monster DVI400	70	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Produces a terrifyingly good picture, with levels of detail and definition to die for.				●		1.0	●					
Monster HDMI400	130	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Overall performance is storming and it is a useful length.					●	4.0	●					
Monster M1000CV (Component)	160	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Not a component cable for every system but worthwhile in the right context.			●			1.0	●				●	
Monster THX RGB Scart	120	07.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Delivers good quality pictures but it is too expensive.		●				2.0	●	●				
Monster THX Ultra 1000	100	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great cable - contrast levels are excellent and colours are endearing.			●			1.5		●				
Nordost Optix Component	175	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. If you've got the right kit it delivers the goods.			●			1.0	●	●			●	60
Nordost Optix Video Super-S	136	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	Expensive but fabulous with outstanding contrast and superb edge definition.	●					1.0	●	●			●	40
Nordost Silver Screen	220	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Absolutely top-class performer - but the heavyweight price tag severely limits it.		●				1	●	●			●	50
Philex 26481H	15	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Cheap, solidly made and the performance is spot on. A great first upgrade.		●				1.5	●				●	
Philex Thor RGB	50	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Picture and build quality that belies its price tag.			●			1.5	●				●	n/a
Philex Thor Scart	30	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Build and performance that belies its pricetag.		●				1.5	●					n/a
Profigold DVI PGM1415	190	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Industrial strength construction and great pictures with no noise - excellent value.				●		15	●					
Profigold PGV 1002	70	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Outperforms analogue connections but its superiority isn't crushing.				●	●	1.0	●					
Profigold PGV 1015	210	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well done Profigold for producing a poised, well-balanced cable at this length.					●	15	●					
Profigold PGV 6602 S-Video	15	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Decent colours and good edge definition - at this price it's a real steal.	●					1.0	●					
Profigold PGV332	37	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Cheap, and a step up from a freebie cable, but not as good as some around.			●			1.5	●					
Profigold PGV335	55	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Really accomplished and fantastic-value - colour balance and detail is excellent.			●			5.0						
Profigold PGV632	32	05.02/GT	★★★★★	Performance at a modest price - lets you adapt your TVs scart sockets to suit.	●	●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7000	45	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Solidly constructed and capable, if not quite a front-runner in perfomance terms.		●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7392	25	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	A deft, natural way with colours and good sound from this affordable cable.		●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7393	30	09.01/FT	★★★☆☆	Uninspiring but a major step up from the freebie Scart slung in with your DVD.		●				1.0	●					
Profigold PGV782	30	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Sensible upgrade - impressive with fast moving action films and colours shine.		●				1.5	●					
QED P2110	30	05.04/FT	★★★★★	Best Scart cable in Awards 2005. Worth every penny.		●				1.0	●				●	



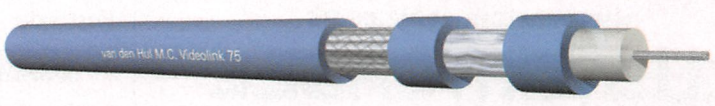
QED P2110

This cable won the Best Scart cable in 2004 and we haven't found a better bet since. The face-on plug makes it to easy for both installation and connection respectively. Not only does it look the business but it also does the business where it's needed: on-screen. It's cheap, convenient and a stellar performer.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST SCART CABLE
QED SQART P2110

QED Performance Sqart P4110	30	11.05/FT	★★★★★	RGB only, but prodigious value for money - fine detail and colours are natural.		●				1.0	●				●	10

van den Hul®
a sound connection !



Distributed by: Henley Designs, 01235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk, www.vandenhul.com

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Superlest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Video cables continued...

Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	Scart	Component	DVI-D	HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Directional	Add. cost. £/m
QED Qunex HDMI-P	58	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best digital video cable in Awards 2005. The detail it gives is awesome.					●	2.0	●					8
QED Qunex P-CV1 Component	45	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best component video cable in Awards 2005. Images full of life and detail.			●			1.0m	●					n/a
QED Qunex SR-CV1 Component	85	10.02/GT	★★★★½	Picture performance is brilliant and it's beautifully built, but it's a little pricey.			●			1.0	●					
QED QUNEX SVS	60	05.02/GT	★★★★½	Delivers a fine performance, but not as vivid in brightness terms as some rivals.	●					1.0	●	●				
QED Signature 5	200	09.05/GT	★★★★★	It costs a lot of money but it fully justifies the expenditure.			●			1.0	●	●				
QED Sqart AV2110	50	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Convincing colours and excellent contrast make this the best Scart at the price.		●				1.0	●	●				
QED Sqart AV4110 (RGB)	50	09.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Video-only, the best picture quality in the test.		●				1.0	●				●	
Supra AV3 Component	65	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Exemplary colour realism and three-dimensionality.			●			1.0	●					11
Supra AV6 (RGB)	80	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Movies benefit from an impressive depth of field.		●				1.0	●			●	●	13
Supra FS Scart	38	11.04/GT	★★★★★	One of the best budget Scarts we've seen for years.		●				1.0	●					
Tech + Link XS141	40	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Lack of image noise is amazing, blacks are superbly defined - a high-value buy.			●			1.0	●					
Tech + Link XS810 Scart	50	05.05/FT	★★★★½	Excellent detail, black definition and depth of field - just a bit pricey.		●				1.0	●	●				
True Colours Ind Taipan S-Video	55	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Sensibly priced, capable cable, with outstanding contrast and depth levels.	●					1.0	●					20
True Colours Ind Taipan Scart	90	08.00/GT	★★★★½	Pricey, but offers sensational performance, with first-rate colour and detail.		●				1.0	●	●				50
TST TV1731	30	10.03/GT	★★★★½	Good step up from basic freebie cables, with smooth colours and edge definition.			●			1.5	●					
TST TV8810-5	27	10.03/GT	★★★★½	Beautifully made and offers a very reasonable level of performance for the price.		●				0.5	●					
van den Hul Compolink	100	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Very fine component lead - generates striking depth of field and fine detail.		●	●			1.5	●	●			●	-
van den Hul HDMI	55	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Nothing threw this cable off balance - use if you can get away with one-metre.					●	1.0	●	●				
Vivanco Prowire Digital	40	03.99	★★★★½	Reveals plenty of punch and detail, delivering fine pictures for the price.		●				1.5	●					
Vivanco ProWire S-Video	25	03.99	★★★★½	Delivers a very good performance, with well-detailed and vibrant images.	●					5.0	●					
Vivanco Prowire SHQ7712	40	03.04/GT	★★★★½	Well made and has decent-quality Scart plugs - fine performance for the money.		●				1.2	●				●	
Wireworld Chroma 5 HDMI/DVI	60	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Very fine - pleasing colour balance and bags of details in the murkiest scenes.				●	●	1.0	●					
Wireworld Chroma 5 Scart	40	11.05/FT	★★★½☆	Majors on depth of field, motion-tracking and good contrast.		●				1.0	●				●	
Wireworld Ultraviolet 5 HDMI	130	07.04/GT	★★★★★	An exceptional cable that will add significantly to your viewing experience.				●	●	1.0	●	●			●	30
Wireworld Ultrav 5 HDMI/DVI+MDR	200	11.05/FT	★★★★½	Effective - connects a DVD player and separate media box, using the MDR cable.				●	●	2.0	●	●			●	-

Digital interconnects

Connect your digital kit with a superior lead

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Coaxial	Optical	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	BNC term	Toslink term	Directional
Atlas Compass	50	08.02/GT	★★★★★	Excellent dynamics, fine timing, rock-solid attack, and the tonal balance is spot-on.	●		1.0	8.5	●				●				
Black Rhodium First-Base Crystal	90	09.02/GT	★★★½☆	Capable of a sound with punch and drive, and high detail resolution. But it's pricey.		●	1.0	7.0				●				●	
Black Rhodium Rhythm	25	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Tight and fast-sounding cable with crisp clarity - affordable with a great sound.	●		1.0	5.8	●	●			●				
Chord Company Optichord	45	03.99/GT	★★★★★	Delivers lots of detail enhancing separation, plus has an excellent sense of timing.		●	1.0	6				●				●	
Ecosse The Executive	50	Awd04/FT	★★★★½	Lucid-sounding but it lacks the drive of the class best.	●		1.0	n/a	●				●				
Ecosse The Producer	21	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000. You won't get better interconnects for the money.	●		0.8		●				●				
Ixos XHD-608-100	50	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Best digital audio cable in Awards 2005.	●		1.0		●	●			●				●

Ixos XHD-608-100

This is the second year running this cable has won an Award. A good coaxial cable is still a vital cog in anyone's home cinema machinery and for the money, Ixos's XHD-608-100 is a highly talented upgrade. It will give your system a more muscular and detailed sound – a great buy, and our favourite coaxial cable.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST DIGITAL AUDIO CABLE
IXOS XHD-608-100

Nordost Moonglo II	179	09.02/GT	★★★★½	Good but expensive. Consider if you're in possession of a very high-end system.	●		1.0		●	●			●	●	●		●
Nordost Moonglow Sl Shadow	368	09.00/GT	★★★★½	There's no denying the MSS produces a fabulous sound, but it's expensive.	●		1.0		●	●			●	●	●		●
Profigold PGD4000	42	08.02/GT	★★★★½	Well specified, weighty sounding cable. Higher frequencies are nicely resolved.	●		0.75		●				●				
Profigold PGD481	20	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Dynamics are particularly impressive for the price.	●		1.0		●				●				
QED QUNEX OT (was Qnect)	30	10.01/GT	★★★★½	Good value interconnect - the presentation is smooth without being boring.		●	1	5				●				●	
Supra Trico	45	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Bargain upgrade for almost any home cinema set-up.	●		1.0	8	●				●		●		●
Supra X-ZAC	60	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. The Supra X-ZAC is great for optical-only connections.		●	1.0	8				●				●	●
True Colours Industries Adder	100	09.00/GT	★★★★½	Refined performer that's well balanced tonally - good but not a class leader.	●		1.0	7	●				●		●		●
van den Hul Optocoupler	55	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. This is one of the best optical links around.		●	1	7.5				●				●	

CD players

A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	Multidisc	Transport	DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Arcam DiVA CD73T	420	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player £250-£500 in Awards 2004. Leading choice at this price.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Audio Analogue Primo CD	475	07.04/FT	★★★½☆	Amiable performer, but the class-leaders point offer a step-up in quality.	●				●			●								Sl
Audiolab 8000CD	600	11.05/GT	★★★★½	Very fine player - open and dynamic-sounding with plenty of power on tap.	●				●	●		●			●			●	●	Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 540C V2	200	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Budget kit has probably never looked or sounded better than this.	●				●	●		●						●		2
Cambridge Audio Azur 640C V2	250	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best CD player under £500 in Awards 2005. Stellar performer.	●				●	●		●						●		2
Denon DCD-485	140	01.02/ST	★★★★½	This Denon is full of character and an exciting listen - match with care.	●					●		●			●			●	●	Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★½ Very good
★★★½☆ Average
★★½☆☆ Below par
★½☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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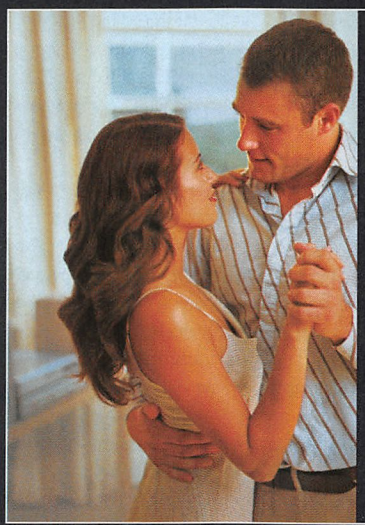
CHRISTMAS DAY
ALL STORES CLOSED - HAPPY CHRISTMAS!
BOXING DAY
ALL STORES CLOSED
NEW YEAR'S DAY
ALL STORES CLOSED - HAPPY NEW YEAR!
SUNDAY 8th JANUARY
MOST STORES OPEN

Due to local variations, please call your local store or visit our website to verify opening hours before travelling.



Specialist hi-fi & home cinema

Contemporary hi-fi is constantly setting new standards in sound reproduction and design. Whatever you listen to, Sevenoaks can recommend separate components that will bring your music collection to life and complement your home. We're enthusiasts and experts, passionate about helping you build (or upgrade) a system that will delight for years to come.

The recent growth of DVD has led to a huge rise in demand for home cinema equipment - DVD players, AV receivers, projectors and plasma screens but, with so many options, it's not easy to know which ones will suit your needs. Indeed, in the face of this quickly evolving and often bemusing array of products, we aim to assist you in assembling a home cinema system to be proud of – one that achieves outstanding picture and sound quality.

Rotel

The **02 Series** is Rotel's entry-level range. The RCD-02 CD player combined with either an RA-01, RA-02 or RA-03 integrated amplifier represents true audiophile performance at an affordable price. For increased high-end performance, the RC-03/RB-3 pre/power amplifiers are available. The RT-02 tuner completes the range.

Audiolab NEW 8000 Series

Audiolab's new 8000 series offers a definitive and genuine hi-fidelity performance from a no-nonsense approach to engineering. These famous products have all been re-engineered to create a complete two channel range, including the 8000S, 8000Q, 8000M and 8000P models plus a all new CD player. A 7.1 channel pre and power amplifier completes the range.

Project

Project is currently one of the world's leading suppliers of turntables, with a range of models designed to satisfy all levels of expectation and budget. The range is simple to use, maintenance free and will function for a lifetime.

Roksan

Roksan designs and manufactures some of the most acclaimed hi-fi equipment currently available. All Roksan products are carefully evaluated by experienced engineers at every stage of the design process with the emphasis on performance and build quality.

B&W

The focus of Bowers and Wilkins Loudspeakers has always been to offer the best possible musical experience. With a combination of the latest R&D techniques and a passion for music, B&W produces a diverse range of products befitting the largest audio manufacturer in the UK.

B&W MINI THEATRE MT-30

"Talented, covetable and worth every penny, the MT-30 (and PV1 especially) could well be heading for iconic status."

Cyrus

If you've enjoyed listening to music before, try listening to it through a Cyrus system. With every product tuned by ear, Cyrus represents a quality of sound, which is rare at any price. Invest in a Cyrus system and you'll be rewarded with a wealth of sound you wouldn't have thought possible.

Quad

Founded in 1938, Quad's history is one of audio excellence. Today's range includes both electronics and speaker systems.

Monitor Audio

Since 1972 Monitor Audio has been developing and perfecting the implementation of metal drivers, innovative crossovers, and exemplary speaker cabinet construction and finish to further the ideal of achieving sound which is to the original "as close as it gets". The range includes - **GOLD, SILVER RS, BRONZE** and **RADIUS** speakers, plus the exciting new **i-Deck** docking station, an excellent any-room companion for your iPod.

Digital Radio

With Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) capability, these high-quality tuners deliver more stations and offers pure, distortion-free, CD-like sound, while providing useful radio and data services.

Pure DRX702ES & NEW **Denon** TU-1800DAB

Wharfedale

Diamond 9.1

"Wharfedale has been updating and tweaking its Diamonds for 20 years - and rough they're not! Tight bass, clear midband, and sparkling treble for not a lot of cash."

Diamond SW150

"Considering the price, the detail and definition to the bass are controlled and cohesive - equally adept with movies and music."

KEF

Replacing the highly successful Q Series, KEF's New iQ line-up comprises eight models from the entry-level iQ1 bookshelf to the impressive iQ9 floorstander. All models incorporate KEF's Uni-Q driver technology and are available in a variety of finishes.

Other KEF ranges include XQ, KHT and the Award-winning KIT100 Home cinema system.

KEF KIT100 "Creating a virtual surround sound experience has never been simpler or more effective, thanks to this two speakers plus subwoofer concoction from KEF."

KEF iQ5

"The iQ5s are little stars, providing stunning scale and authority from discreetly sized towers...

The iQ5s are fully deserving Products of the Year. "

Acoustic Energy

Established in 1987, Acoustic Energy is one of Britain's premier loudspeaker manufacturers offering one of the most targeted range of hi-fi and home cinema loudspeaker systems on the market today.

"The legendary AE1 lives on in this groundbreaking new version... It sets a new standard for small speakers."

KEF KHT1005

"The KHT1005 is an ideal first-time buy, and will suit those looking to 'downsize' to a more living-room friendly style of speaker."

Arcam

Arcam has spent more than a generation building some of the finest high-fidelity products the world has ever seen. Whether you're interested in two-channel or a complete multi-channel AV system, the Arcam DiVA series offers the music and movie lover the most complete range of high-performance home entertainment solutions from any specialist manufacturer.

Marantz

Marantz is introducing a host of new products ranging from high-end hi-fi to HD-ready DVD players and AV receivers. The two main products groups are the 'premium' and 'range' series.

The SR9600THX Ultra2 AV receiver offers seven channels, each 140w, and features HDMI inputs. The groundbreaking DV9600 is one of the first DVD players capable of upscaling images to 1080p and is fully prepared for the high-definition future.

Teac

TEAC's all-new Reference Series offers innovation in audio-visual technology. The CR-250 DAB CD Receiver is a superb one-box unit which, when linked to a pair of speakers, makes for a cracking music system. While the Reference 300 Series T-H300DAB Mk II DAB/AM/FM tuner, when matched with the new 300 Series Mk II amplifier and CD player, forms another outstanding system.

Also available, the beautifully styled, award-winning Legacy systems, offering DVD with satellite speaker home cinema excellence.

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Denon

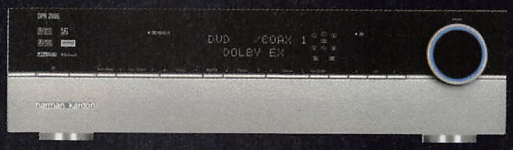
Denon, Japan's oldest audio company, has established an enviable reputation for the performance of both its hi-fi and home cinema products, winning numerous awards and accolades over the years. Its stylish systems have succeeded in becoming the benchmark by which all other are judged.

DVD-A1XV "The most obvious winner of any category this year has to be Denon's evolutionary step in DVD deck design, the landmark DVD-A1XV... An astonishing piece of kit that has no equals."
AVC-A1XV "It's not often we can't find fault with a product, but as we said in our review, "It not only expands the home cinema envelope, it shreds it and then nukes it for good measure." HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005

Yamaha

Yamaha is recognised as a world leader in the fields of musical instruments and audio equipment, and in more recent years, home cinema. New models for 2005 include upgraded A/V receivers, amplifers, and DVD players plus the innovative YSP-1 virtual surround speaker.

YAMAHA'S DVD-S2500, DSP-AX757SE & RX-V4600



Harman Kardon

Harman/Kardon's high quality audio, audio/visual and multi-room products are more than just boxes with knobs on, they are declarations of passion for music and movies. Producing pure, realistic sound with ever smarter engineering and simpler design, Harman/Kardon products delight both the audio purist and the film lover around the world. We invite you to experience the unique combination of artistry and engineering that is Harman/Kardon.

REL

In a market packed with subwoofers claiming to deliver the ultimate bass experience, only one brand of sub-bass system can prove its supremacy. With a record of review success stretching back over a decade, REL is acknowledged as the leading provider of deep, clean bass frequencies.

M&K

Enjoy cinema as the director intended with a speaker system that is genuinely designed for surround sound. Every Miller & Kreisel surround sound system is designed around the highest quality centre speaker available and partnered with two identical main speakers, producing seamless panning across the front soundstage, combined with remarkable clarity and effortless dynamics.

Onkyo DS-A1 iPod Connector Dock

Onkyo

"A Dinky design that offers a vigorous listen, plus reassuringly solid build... Onkyo's CR-505DAB is a fab buy."

Pioneer

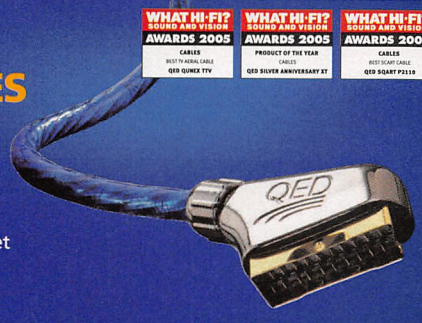
Pioneer's AV amplifiers and receivers are sound-tuned by the world-famous Air Studios to perfectly recreate the natural sound and energy of the original performance. The result is powerful, pure and crisp. Coupled with HDMI and iLink digital connectivity, as well as a connection for your iPod and PC, the audio adventure is even more absolute.

DVD Recorders

Although making digital recordings of TV broadcasts isn't new, the choice, versatility and quality of recorders keep getting better. Our product selection includes DVD only, hybrid DVD/hard-disk and multi-format models.

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

The right accessories can make or break your system. Our carefully selected range, including **QED**, **SOUNDSTYLE** and **GRADO**, will ensure you get the very best performance from your system.



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Specialist home cinema

At the heart of any home cinema is its screen: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision can put you in the picture with a selection of flat-panel displays and projection systems. LCD and plasma screens are just a few centimetres thick and come in sizes from a 13inch portable to over 60inches.

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

Pioneer

Following its highly successful '5' series, Pioneer has unveiled its sixth generation of plasma TVs. The 43" PDP-436XDE and 50" PDP-506XDE models include built-in digital tuners plus dual HDMI inputs.

PDP-436XDE PLASMA TV

"Pioneer's latest is also its greatest: this is a truly wonderful HD-Ready TV."

Sharp Aquos

Only Sharp Aquos LCD TV offers so much perfection. With supreme styling, the appeal of the Aquos range is obvious. The Titanium Series combines Sharp's sixth-generation LCD panel with stunning, angular-styling, titanium colour-finish and superb build quality to produce a premium class of LCD idTVs

TITANIUM SERIES LC-45GD1E LCD TV with integrated FREEVIEW

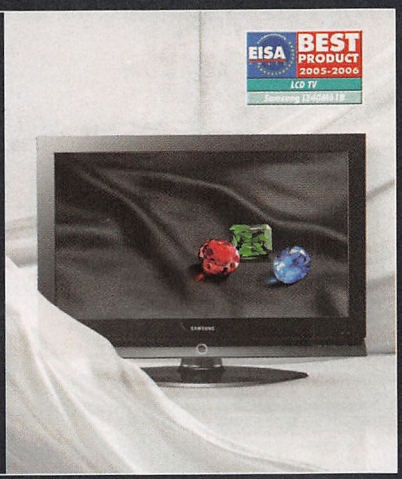
"Sharp's mammoth 45in LCD TV is a testament to the growing viability and performance of large-scale LCD. Its 1,920 x1,080 resolution panel allows high-definition pictures to be viewed without compromise and when exploited to its full potential, the results could see this screen hung in a gallery. Images are so crisp and sharp, it almost makes reality look dull.We think it's inspirational. Go pay homage."**HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005**

FREEVIEW channel and service subject to coverage. Aerial upgrade may be required.

Samsung

Milano LE40M61B 40" LCD TV

Samsung's New 40" LCD TV (LE40M61B) was honored with an EISA award for its premium display technology in terms of contrast ratio (5000:1), color expression (6.44 billion colors, 92% color gamut for NTSC), viewing angle (178°) and response time (8 ms). Also the model's simple body design focuses the viewer's attention on the screen. On the front of the minimalist design, the speakers are hidden from view in the bottom bezel and nothing distracts from the superb image quality



Loewe

Concept L32 32" LCD TV

With its minimalist, functional design, slim profile and ease of operation, the Concept L32 exudes all of the classic Loewe virtues.

"This HD Ready set boasts 1366x768 resolution and plenty of inputs, including HDMI, component video and two Scarts. It also packs an integrated digital TV tuner, and - as ever with Loewe sets - its speaker set-up is a cut above most rivals... The Concept L32 is immensely attractive: it deserves to sell very well indeed."

Panasonic Viera

There seems little doubt that the future of television is flat, and the future of flat is the award-winning VIERA range from the world leaders in screen technology, Panasonic. The VIERA range consists of both LCD and Plasma televisions. New additions to the range include 37, 42 & 50in **PV500** models with support for both high-definition and MPEG-4 recording.

TH42PV500 PLASMA TV

"All told, Panasonic's new TH42PV500 is a stunning set that's clearly the new class leader."

32WLT58 LCD TV

"All in all, this is a great set. The twin HDMI inputs lift it a step above the current competition, while the performance could easily grace something far costlier."

WHAT VIDEO • XMAS 2005 #301

Toshiba LCD TV

These super-slim screens will take your breath away. Each model has been moulded from a stunning blend of cutting-edge design and state-of-the-art technology to create the ultimate audio-visual sensation. The collection comprises LCD screen technology, offering unrivalled combinations of image quality and sophistication and a variety of screen sizes and options, including integrated digital tuner.

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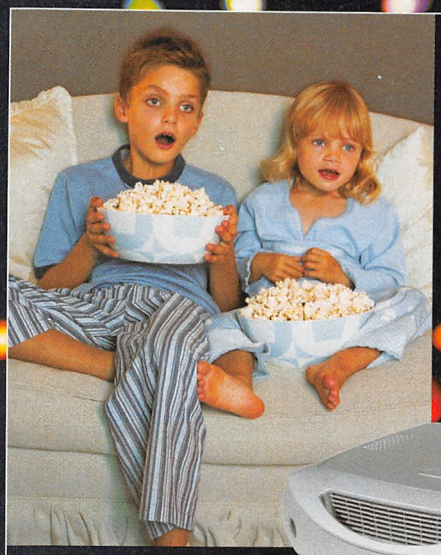
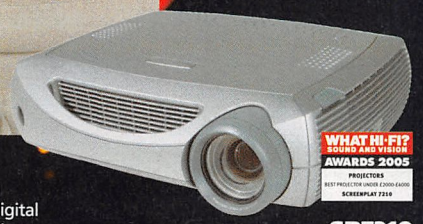
Winter Sale
STARTS 17 DECEMBER 2005



Projection

If you'd prefer to measure your screen-size in feet, how about one of the new generation of projectors? The latest designs are delivering superb results at increasingly affordable prices - and they're more home friendly than previous projectors, too.



ScreenPlay

From the worldwide leader in digital projection technology and solutions, InFocus® ScreenPlay® DLP™ projectors are changing the face of home cinema offering market-beating performance, specification and value at every price point.

SP7210
"The new projector's picture is just phenomenal... Looks like ScreenPlay's success story is set to continue."

SP4805
"Another stunning success from ScreenPlay - there's never been a better time to take the big-screen plunge."

Sim2

Sim2 Multimedia is a world-leading manufacturer at the forefront of home cinema technology and a name synonymous with high-end home cinema projection.

HT300E "Spectacular, in a word... Another terrific projector from Italy's finest."
WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292

Themescene

Since its launch, the multi-award winning ThemeScene™ brand has rapidly established a five-star reputation for uncompromised image quality.

H30A "There are so many good points it's hard to know where to start... Just how much better can budget DLP projectors get?!"
WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292

DVDO iScan™ VP30

The **iScan™ VP30** is a high-definition video processor and A/V hub that converts standard or high definition from your DVD player, VCR, PVR, HD set top box, game console, or PC to any output resolution between 480p and 1080p, including popular HDTV resolutions such as 720p and 1080i.

£ PRICING POLICY

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.

FLEXIBLE FINANCE OPTIONS‡

Spread the cost of buying. Flexible finance options are available on the majority of products we stock. ‡**Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.**

PLEASE NOTE Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or visit our website before travelling.

Special Offers and Sale Offers - Not in conjunction with any other offer. Advert valid until at least 12/01/2006, E&OE.

Product Selection

Listed below is a small selection of our extensive product range. **Please note:** Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or see the brand locator at **www.ssav.com** before travelling.

TURNTABLES

Goldring GR2	£ SALE
Linn RANGE	£ SALE
Michell RANGE	£ SALE
Project RANGE	£ SALE
Roksan Radius 5	£ SALE

TUNERS

Arcam RANGE	£ SALE
Cyrus FM X	£ SALE
Denon TU260L MKII	£ SALE
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ SALE
Linn RANGE	£ SALE
Marantz RANGE	£ SALE
Pure DRX-701ES DAB	£ SALE
Pure DRX-702ES DAB/FM	£ SALE
Rotel RANGE	£ SALE

CD PLAYERS

Arcam RANGE	£ SALE
Audiolab RANGE	£ SALE
Cyrus RANGE	£ SALE
Denon DCD485	£ SALE
Linn RANGE	£ SALE
Marantz RANGE	£ SALE
Meridian RANGE	£ SALE
Musical Fidelity RANGE	£ SALE
NAD RANGE	£ SALE
Quad RANGE	£ SALE
Roksan RANGE	£ SALE
Rotel RANGE	£ SALE

CD RECORDERS

Yamaha CDR-HD1500	£ SALE

AMPLIFIERS

Arcam RANGE	£ SALE
Audiolab RANGE	£ SALE
Cyrus RANGE	£ SALE
Denon PMA355	£ SALE
Linn RANGE	£ SALE
Marantz RANGE	£ SALE
Meridian RANGE	£ SALE
Musical Fidelity RANGE	£ SALE
NAD RANGE	£ SALE
Quad RANGE	£ SALE
Roksan RANGE	£ SALE
Rotel RANGE	£ SALE
Yamaha AX396	£ SALE

HI-FI SPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£ SALE
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£ SALE
Acoustic Energy Aelite RANGE	£ SALE
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII	£ SALE
AVI Neutron IV	£ SALE
B&W RANGE	£ SALE
KEF RANGE	£ SALE
Linn RANGE	£ SALE
Meridian RANGE	£ SALE
Mission RANGE	£ SALE
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ SALE
Quad RANGE	£ SALE
Ruark RANGE	£ SALE
Wharfedale RANGE	£ SALE

HI-FI SYSTEMS

Arcam Solo Ex Speakers	£ SALE
Denon RANGE	£ SALE
Linn Classik Music Ex Spks	£ SALE
Monitor Audio i-Deck	£ SALE
Onkyo CR505DAB Ex Spks	£ SALE
Teac RANGE	£ SALE
Yamaha CRX-M170 Ex Spks	£ SALE

DVD SYSTEMS

Denon RANGE	£ SALE
KEF KIT100 Inc Speakers	£ SALE
Teac RANGE	£ SALE

MULTI-ROOM AUDIO

Cyrus Link RANGE	£ SALE
Living Control RANGE	£ SALE
Yamaha MusicCast RANGE	£ SALE

DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Arcam RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Cyrus RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Denon RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Denon DVD-A1XV	£ SALE	£ SALE
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Marantz RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Meridian RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Panasonic RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Pioneer RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Samsung DVD-HD950	£ SALE	£ SALE
Toshiba SD350	£ SALE	£ SALE
Yamaha RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE

DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Panasonic RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE
Pioneer RANGE	£ SALE	£ SALE

A/V AMPLIFIERS & RECEIVERS

Arcam RANGE	£ SALE
Audiolab RANGE	£ SALE
Cyrus RANGE	£ SALE
Denon AVC-A1XV A/V Amplifier	£ SALE
Denon RANGE	£ SALE
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ SALE
Lexicon RANGE	£ SALE
Marantz RANGE	£ SALE
Onkyo RANGE	£ SALE
Pioneer VSX-1014s A/V Receiver	£ SALE
Pioneer VSX-2014i A/V Receiver	£ SALE
Pioneer VSX-AX5Ai A/V Receiver	£ SALE
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai A/V Amplifier	£ SALE
Pioneer NEW RANGE	£ SALE
Rotel RANGE	£ SALE
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE A/V Amplifier	£ SALE
Yamaha RX-V357 A/V Receiver	£ SALE
Yamaha RX-V557 A/V Receiver	£ SALE

A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Evo 3B	£ SALE
Artcoustic RANGE	£ SALE
Audica RANGE	£ SALE
B&W RANGE	£ SALE
B&W Mini Theatre RANGE	£ SALE
KEF KHT1005	£ SALE
KEF KHT2005.2	£ SALE
KEF Q7 AV	£ SALE
M&K RANGE	£ SALE
Mission M Cube	£ SALE
Mission Elegante RANGE	£ SALE
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ SALE
Mordaunt Short Genie	£ SALE
Quad L-Series	£ SALE
Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP	£ SALE
Yamaha YSP RANGE	£ SALE

SUBWOOFERS

B&W RANGE	£ SALE
M&K RANGE	£ SALE
MJ Acoustics RANGE	£ SALE
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ SALE
Quad L Series	£ SALE
REL RANGE	£ SALE
Wharfedale Diamond SW150	£ SALE

PLASMA

Fujitsu RANGE	£ SALE
Hitachi RANGE	£ SALE
LG RANGE	£ SALE
Loewe RANGE	£ SALE
Panasonic RANGE	£ SALE
Pioneer PDP436XDE 43"	£ SALE
Pioneer PDP506XDE 50"	£ SALE
Samsung RANGE	£ SALE

LCD TV

Hitachi RANGE	£ SALE
LG RANGE	£ SALE
Loewe RANGE	£ SALE
Panasonic RANGE	£ SALE
Philips RANGE	£ SALE
Samsung RANGE	£ SALE
Sharp Aquos RANGE	£ SALE
Toshiba RANGE	£ SALE

PROJECTORS

Optoma RANGE	£ SALE
Screenplay RANGE	£ SALE
ScreenPlay SP5700 (REFURBISHED, LAST FEW)	£ SALE
Sharp RANGE	£ SALE
Sim 2 RANGE	£ SALE
Sim 2 C3X	£ SALE
ThemeScene RANGE	£ SALE

ACCESSORIES

We have a wide range of Accessories from **QED, Soundstyle, Grado, Goldring** and **more...**

Who are Sevenoaks?

Established as Sevenoaks Hi-Fi in 1972, we have grown steadily onto one of the leading independent home entertainment specialists in the UK, earning a reputation for outstanding service, choice and value for money. In 1995, reflecting our commitment to the emergent new technologies in home cinema, our name was changed to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision. We now have 49 stores across the land stocking a broad range of exceptional equipment and accessories.

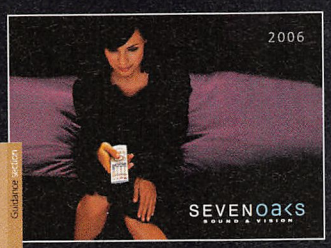
How to shop at Sevenoaks

When it comes to making big decisions about what to buy, there's no substitute for actually road-testing your prospective purchases - seeing, hearing and experiencing the products in action, with the benefit of our expert knowledge and guidance to help you choose.

Hi-Fi & Home Cinema Guide

New 2006 Edition

Pick-up a copy of our new **68 Page Guide** at your nearest Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store or order a copy via our Website. The brochure will be posted to you (UK mainland addresses only) **FREE OF CHARGE**.



New Sevenoaks Website

The fully re-designed Sevenoaks Sound & Vision website has news and information on the Sevenoaks group and detailed pages to help you locate your nearest store. You will find all our fabulous **WINTER SALE** offers and, in addition, hundreds of **STOCK CLEARANCE** items available from our stores nationwide - many with savings of up to 50%. To find out more, just click on **www.ssav.com**

WITH OUR CUSTOM DESIGNED INSTALLATIONS, your home entertainment choices become as convenient as they are clever. We can help transform every room and every home, whatever your requirements and budget.

Our installation experts are trained to the highest standards in all areas and provide a prompt, reliable and totally professional service. Rest assured also that our commitment to service doesn't end once your equipment is in place. Sevenoaks staff will continue to support you and your kit long after your initial visit to one of our stores.

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

NATIONWIDE STORE GUIDE

ABERDEEN 01224 252797
- 57 CROWN STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

BEDFORD 01234 272779
- 29-31 ST PETERS STREET

BRIGHTON 01273 733338
- 57 WESTERN ROAD, HOVE

BRISTOL 0117 974 3727
- 92B WHITELADIES ROAD, CLIFTON

BROMLEY 020 8290 1988
- 39A EAST STREET

CAMBRIDGE 01223 304770
- 17 BURLEIGH STREET

CARDIFF 029 2047 2899
- 104-106 ALBANY ROAD

CHELSEA 020 7352 9466
- 403 KINGS ROAD

CHELTENHAM 01242 241171
- 14 PITTVILLE STREET

CRAWLEY 01293 510777
- 32 THE BOULEVARD

CROYDON 020 8665 1203
- 369-373 LONDON ROAD

EALING 020 8579 8777
- 24 THE GREEN *OPEN SUNDAY*

EDINBURGH 0131 229 7267
- 5 THE GRASSMARKET

EPSOM 01372 720720
- 12 UPPER HIGH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

EXETER 01392 218895
- 28 COWICK STREET

GLASGOW 0141 332 9655
- 88 GREAT WESTERN ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

GUILDFORD 01483 536666
- 73B NORTH STREET

HOLBORN 020 7837 7540
- 144-148 GRAYS INN ROAD

HULL 01482 587171
- 1 SAVILE ROW, SAVILE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

KINGSTON 020 8547 0717
- 43 FIFE ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

LEEDS 0113 245 2775
- 62 NORTH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

LEICESTER 0116 253 6567
- 10 LOSEBY LANE

LINCOLN 01522 527397
- 20-22 CORPORATION STREET *(OFF HIGH STREET)*

LOUGHTON 020 8532 0770 **NEW**
- 7-9 GOLDINGS HILL

MAIDSTONE 01622 686366
- 96 WEEK STREET

MANCHESTER 0161 831 7969
- 69 HIGH ST, CITY CENTRE

NEWCASTLE 0191 221 2320
- 19 NEWGATE STREET

NORWICH 01603 767605
- 29-29A ST GILES STREET

NOTTINGHAM 0115 911 2121
- 597-599 MANSFIELD ROAD, SHERWOOD

OXFORD 01865 241773
- 41 ST CLEMENTS STREET

PETERBOROUGH 01733 897697
- 36-38 PARK ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

PLYMOUTH 01752 226011
- 107 CORNWALL STREET

POOLE 01202 671677
- LATIMER HOUSE, 44-46 HIGH STREET

PRESTON 01772 825777
- 40-41 LUNE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

READING 0118 959 7768
- 3-4 KINGS WALK SHOPPING CENTRE

SEVENOAKS 01732 459555
- 109-113 LONDON ROAD

SHEFFIELD 0114 255 5861
- 635 QUEENS ROAD, HEELEY *OPEN SUNDAY*

SOLIHULL 0121 733 3727
- 149-151 STRATFORD ROAD

SOUTHAMPTON 023 8033 7770
- 33 LONDON ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

SOUTHGATE 020 8886 2777
- 77 CHASE SIDE

STAINES 01784 460777
- 4 THAMES STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

SWINDON 01793 610992
- 8-9 COMMERCIAL ROAD

SWISS COTTAGE 020 7722 9777
- 21 NORTHWAYS PDE, FINCHLEY RD *OPEN SUNDAY*

TUNBRIDGE WELLS 01892 531543
- 28-30 ST JOHNS ROAD

WATFORD 01923 213533
- 478 ST ALBANS ROAD

WEYBRIDGE 01932 828525
- 43 CHURCH STREET, THE QUADRANT

WITHAM (ESSEX) 01376 501733
- 1 THE GROVE CENTRE

WOLVERHAMPTON 01902 312225
- 29-30 CLEVELAND STREET

YEOVIL 01935 700078 **NEW**
- 14 SILVER STREET

OPENING HOURS: PLEASE TELEPHONE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE
E-MAIL: [insert store location]@ssav.com

Save up to 25%

in our fabulous **Winter Sale**. Visit **www.ssav.com** or call your nearest store on Freephone **0800 587 9909** for the latest prices and information.

Winter Sale
STARTS 17 DECEMBER 2005

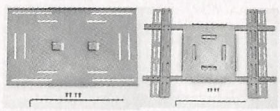
KEENE ELECTRONICS MAIL ORDER

RGB to S-Video convertor

• Converts the RGB scart output of Sky Digital/ITV Digital boxes, and DVD players, into S-video • Ideal for making high resolution connections to AV amps, S-VHS/D-VHS recorders and plasma screens • NTSC and PAL compatible • Uses broadcast spec ICs for high quality results [RGB2S] £59.99

Flat screen wall mounts

Left: Tilting wall mount for LCD/TFT displays up to 21"/14kg [BT7511] £24.99
Non-tilt version [BT7510] £19.99
Below and right: Universal wall mounts (include fitting kits not shown) for plasma screens up to 70kg
[BT8000] for solid walls £79.99
[BT8001] for stud walls £79.99
[BT8002] tilting version of BT8000 £89.99



Many more options inc projector mounts at keene.co.uk

Sound level meter with digital display

• Phono output for connection to external equipment • 21-bar graphical display
[SLM2055] £39.99

RF THROUGH MODULATORS

Wideband RF Through Modulator
• Display AV signals on a TV • Ideal for use with CCTV security cameras, VCRs without RF output etc • PAL I/G switchable with test signal. [KRFTW] £39.99

STERLING CABLES Gold

• High quality AV cables in a wide range of lengths. For example:

S-video plug / S-video plug 3.0m	[SG43]	£15.99
Scart plug / scart plug 0.75m	[SG51]	£12.99
Scart plug / S-VHS plug + 2 phonos switchable IN or OUT of scart 10.0m	[SG85S]	£34.99

HDMI and DVI cables

Length	HDMI to DVI		HDMI to HDMI	
1.0m			[HDHD1]	£19.99
2.0m	[HDDV2]	£29.99	[HDHD2]	£24.99
3.0m	[HDDV3]	£34.99	[HDHD3]	£29.99
5.0m	[HDDV5]	£49.99	[HDHD5]	£34.99
10.0m	[HDDV10]	£89.99	[HDHD10]	£49.99
15.0m			[HDHD15]	£59.99
20.0m			[HDHD20]	£79.99

Pictured right : HDHDxx

Your IR remote can 'see' round corners and into cabinets!

Keene IR Distribution Amplifier

• Receives IR command signals from your remote or the receiver of a wireless system and routes them to where they're needed • There your choice of emitter wand transmits the commands to the equipment • Basic kit supports up to 5 emitters and comprises IR distribution amp, one each low and high power wands, mains power adaptor [IRBKIT] £34.99
Requires receiver: Standard [IRSR] £7.99 Wideband [IRWBR] £12.99
Basic kit as above + standard receiver bundle [IRBKITS] £39.99

NEW Keene IR Commander

The ultimate solution for controlling equipment by IR remote, even when the equipment is out of sight • Builds on the proven technology of the Keene IR Distribution amplifier to provide a greatly expanded number of inputs and outputs • Optional expansion modules allow up control of equipment up to 50m away • Basic kit comprises Keene IR commander, 240V UK mains adaptor, and high power emitter wand [IRC] £99.99

HSR1000 SCART SWITCHBOX

• Effectively a Home Cinema friendly 7x3 Matrix switcher. • Seven inputs (six scart plus front AV), any of which can be independently routed to one of four outputs • Supports digital audio (SPDIF) on three of the inputs • Now shipping Mk2 version with widescreen support. [HSR1000] £89.00

TURN ANY MONITOR INTO A TV...

PROGRESSIVE SCAN TV CONVERTORS

PV200 video switchbox can line double (output to SVGA) and has a built in terrestrial (analogue) TV tuner • Turn your projector, CRT, LCD or Plasma screen into a true multimedia centre – use the PV200 to connect it to a DVD, VCR, camcorder, games console, satellite receiver or to watch TV • PAL PLUS chipset eliminates motion artefacts and provides sharp-edged smooth moving pictures • Plug and play set up with on-screen menus and automatic channel scan • Supplied complete with IR remote & UK mains adaptor. [PV200] £84.99
[PV500], as PV200 plus Teletext & Nicam [PV500] £129.99
Many more line doublers & scalers available at www.keene.co.uk

SyncBLASTER RGB Cables

SyncBlaster cables connect RGB scart equipment directly to projectors, plasma screens and LCD screens • The scart connecting plug of these cables houses a fully functional sync separator and amplifier which can draw its power directly from the scart socket (pin 8) so for most applications there's no power supply to worry about either! • Available in a choice of configurations each in four lengths from 1.5m to 10m. Prices from £69.99

DVI 1 to 2 DISTRIBUTION AMPLIFIER

• DVI distribution amplifier • Allows one source to drive two displays • Fully HDCP compliant
[DDD12] £249.00

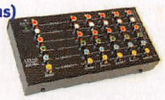
LEADS to GO

Custom AV cables made to your requirements. We can make more or less anything to anything, at any length you want. Easy price calculator in our FREE catalogue and on our web site www.keene.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION AMPLIFIERS

Multiple outputs, without signal loss, from one input

5-Way video + audio (phono connections)



• One input, five fully buffered outputs. • Wide bandwidth HDTV capable. • Use for component, RGBs, s- or 4 x composite video + stereo audio. [KPDA] £99.99

5-Way video + audio (scart)

One in 5 out all via scarts. Fully wired, fully buffered. • Composite, RGB & s-video compatible. [SDA] £89.99

Keene 4-Way with Line Drive

S- or composite video plus stereo audio – 4 identical outputs from one input. • Line drive option [KDA] £69.99

APTUS convertors

• Video standards convertors designed to be easy to connect and operate
Aptus 1 • RGB to component video convertor • Convert RGBs (set top box RGB with composite sync) into component (Y Pb Pr) video. • Simple scart plug design [APT1] £79.99
NEW Aptus 2
• Converts component video to RGB video. [APT2] £89.99

Scart Commander 4:1 scart switchbox

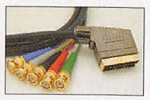
• High quality AV switcher allows connection of multiple sources to one display, all via scart connections. • Can handle component, composite, s-, and RGB video, even digital audio. • One unit allows four to one switching, or two units in a master/slave arrangement to provide 7:1 switching. • LED indication of selected output. Separate mains adaptor for improved mains isolation. Solid metal case for enhanced screening. [KSC] £149.99
Twin pack (7:1 switching) ..... [KSCT] £249.99

Buy on-line at www.keene.co.uk

Mini wireless spy cameras PRICE CRASH!

Complete kit including colour camera (pictured) and receiver [KC802A] just £49.00
Other models available, please give us a call or check www.keene.co.uk

Ready made high spec RGB & component video cables



Scart, phono, 15 pin HD and BNC end connector options, full range of lengths. For examples:

Scart/3 BNC plugs 2.0m	[SBB32] £29.99
3 phono plugs/3 phono plugs 5.0m	[SBB104] £39.99
15 pin HD male/3 BNC plugs 10.0m	[SBB505] £44.99

Remote controls

Kameleon 6 in 1 multi device remote just £59.99 code [URC8206] Many more at www.keene.co.uk

Want to send high quality audio & video over long distances via CAT5 cable? We have the system for you:

CAT5BLASTER

Cat5Blaster QC

* Easy to install one to one solution
* S-video and stereo audio
* No power supply required
* Send AV up to 100m

Cat5Blaster QC transmitter/receiver modules, pair [C5BQC] £89.99

Cat5Blaster QC Active

* Easy to install one to one solution
* S-video and stereo audio
* IR feedback to control source equipment
* Send AV up to 100m

Cat5Blaster QC Active transmitter module and receiver module, one of each [C5BQCA] £99.99

Cat5Blaster

* One to one or one to many
* Composite video, s-video, component or RGsB (sync on green)
* IR feedback
* Stereo audio or digital coaxial
* Send AV up to 300m

Cat5Blaster transmitter module with power supply, master receiver module, standard IR receiver, standard IR emitter wand [C5B] £259.99
Cat5Blaster slave receiver with power supply [C5BSR] £129.99
Cat5Blaster master receiver power supply (extend range to 300m+) [KT5] £5.99
CAT5 network cable [KBL23] 10m+ £0.47/m; 305m reel £80.00

HDMI SWITCHBOX

• HDMI switchbox • Two inputs to one output • Fully HDCP compliant • remote control
[HDS21R] £239.00

DVI 2 to 1 SWITCHBOX

• DVI switchbox • Two inputs to 1 output • Fully HDCP compliant • Remote control
[DS21R] £239.00

DIGITAL AUDIO DELAY MODULE

• Cure lip sync errors • Two inputs with remote control • Optical or coaxial connections • 12 user presets *(Note - for digital audio only)*
[DD540] £139.00

DVI to VGA CONVERTOR

Don't buy a new screen just yet! • Great problem solver for non-HDCP displays • Converts DVI signal to VGA • Fully HDCP compliant • Compact size • Hi-def resolution [DVIFIX] £225.00

KEENE ELECTRONICS
Tel : 0870 990 9000
Fax : 01332 830551
Alt Tel : 01332 830550
MAIL ORDER WAREHOUSE & SHOWROOM • VISITORS WELCOME OFFICE HOURS
UNIT 9 OLD HALL MILLS BUSINESS PARK LITTLE EATON DERBYSHIRE DE21 5DN UK

ORDER BY TELEPHONE, FAX or E-MAIL ANY TIME.
FOR HELP AND ADVICE PLEASE TELEPHONE
9am – 5.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am – 5pm Saturdays
E-mail sales@keene.co.uk

VISA MasterCard SWITCH DELTA SOLO
WV151105

WRITE, PHONE, FAX or E-MAIL for your FREE COPY of our latest CATALOGUE

CD players continued...

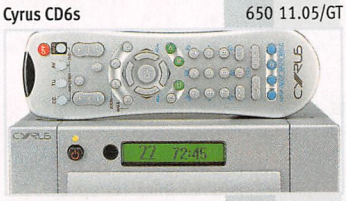
A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	TYPE: Multidisc	TYPE: Transport	TYPE: DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Optical digital out	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: XLR out	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: RCA out	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital in	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Optical digital in	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Exposure 2010s	600	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Great player - fabulous treble, great dynamics, and a weighty bottom end.	●				●	●								●	●	Sl
Harman-Kardon HD970	300	11.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Promises much, but doesn't follow through - it's a disappointment.	●				●			●	●	●			●	●	●	Bk
Inca Design Katana	600	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Up there with the best with its rich detail, musicality and sublime build.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Sl
Marantz CD5400	150	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Remarkable player for the money, with superb sound, looks and feel.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●		2
Myryad Z110	500	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	This product lacks the magic of the company's established machines.	●				●									●	●	2
NAD C521BEE	200	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Open and involving, and still a bargain.	●				●			●						●		2
NAD C542	330	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Maintains NAD's impressive run of affordable, quality separates.	●				●	●		●				●		●		Gr
Onkyo C-733	400	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Tested with the A-933 amplifier - sonically they can be bettered.	●					●		●						●	●	Sl
Pioneer PD-F1009	250	11.00/GT	★★★★☆	Logical and fuss-free to program - a hard multiplayer to beat for sound.	●	●				●		●			●		●	●		Bk
Rega Planet	498	11.02/ST	★★★★☆	A fine choice for those who want something just a little different.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Rotel RCD 1072	595	09.03/ST	★★★★☆	Beautifully built and a joy to use, but it lacks a little bit of sparkle.	●				●							●		●		Sl
Rotel RCD-02	380	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Punchy performer - bassheads will especially enjoy its tight delivery.	●				●			●				●		●		Sl
Sony SCD-XE597(SACD)	150	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine player and it is worth a look if you like your music safe.	●					●		●			●			●		2
TEAC C-1D	240	08.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Respectable offering from Teac but unlikely to set hearts a-flutter.	●					●					●			●	●	Sl
Yamaha CDX-396	130	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Smooth, system-friendly player - will tame bright-sounding systems.	●					●		●						●	●	Bl
Yamaha CDX-496	190	01.02/ST	★★★☆☆	The Yamaha is a good machine for the cash with a relaxing, warm sound.	●					●		●			●			●	●	Bl

BUDGET £601 to £2000

Arcam DiVA CD192	850	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Sensational disc-spinner with bags of sonic appeal.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Arcam FMJ CD36	1400	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	A disappointment despite a top-class technical specification.	●				●	●		●					●			Sl
Audio Analogue Paganini	925	07.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks with a fantastic remote control, but only average performance.	●				●			●								Sl
Audio Note DAC One 1x	900	09.00/FT	★★★★★	Superbly natural, this cracking DAC succeeds in giving CDs new life.				●	●			●	●							Sl
Copland CDA823	1750	10.05/ST	★★★★★	Lyrical and energetic - sounds a good deal more expensive than it is.	●				●	●	●	●					●	●	●	Sl
Creek CD50 Mk2	850	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Solid, smooth-sounding player with warmth and weight.	●				●	●		●						●		Sl
Cyrus CD6s	650	11.05/GT	★★★★★	CD player Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Astonishing performer.	●					●		●						●	●	2



Cyrus CD6s

Astonishing performer for the money – the old CD6 was superb but the new player is much better across the board. It sounds more authoritative, because the bass end is just so much more powerful and solid than before. A belting player with the usual Cyrus advantages of easy upgradability and fine build.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CD PLAYERS
CYRUS CD6s

Cyrus CD8x	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player £1000-£1500 in Awards 2005. Sensational detail.	●				●	●		●						●	●	2
Cyrus CD8x/PSX-R	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	Pairing the CD8x with the PSX-R brings extra resolution and scale.	●				●	●		●						●	●	No
Cyrus DACX	1100	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Great DAC, which will improve on the sound of most CD players.				●		●	●	●	●	●						2
Densen Beat B-400 Plus	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★★	Handsome box with an up-front and energetic sound, loaded with detail.	●				●			●						●	●	2
Exposure 22	1395	04.04/FT	★★★★☆	Rich, dynamic and detailed sound from a fuss-free design.	●				●	●								●	●	Al
Exposure Classic XXII	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	Very characterful sound, fast and confident - give it a thorough audition.	●				●	●		●	●	●			●		●	Sl
Inca Design Katana SE	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	Special edition of the Katana - big and brawny and sounds much the same.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Sl
Linn Genki	1100	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Gloriously musical and beautifully built - remains a fave of ours still.	●				●			●				●		●	●	Bk
Meridian G07	1595	06.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Plenty of substance, but the Meridian lacks the sparkle to really impress.	●				●	●		●						●	●	2
Monrio Asty Player	895	04.00/FT	★★★★★	Classy Italian product that offers a sophisticated and entertaining sound.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Moon Equinox	1950	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Class machine for those who plan long, indulgent listening sessions.	●				●			●						●	●	Bk
Myryad MXC6000	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	The unruffled sound is truly impressive - full of finesse and polish.	●				●			●							●	2
Naim CD5i	825	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Remains a fine-sounding option in an incredibly competitive market.	●							●						●	●	Bk
Naim CD5x	1450	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	Quirky, appealing player with an involving, engaging sound.	●							●				●				Bk

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★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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CD players continued...

A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET £601 to £2000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	TYPE: Multidisc	TYPE: Transport	TYPE: DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Onkyo C-1VL	800	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	There are now far more capable players around for not much more money.	●				●	●		●						●	●	Sl
Orelle CD100evo2	1300	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Plenty of sonic prowess but looks a little pricey alongside some rivals.	●							●							●	Sl
Primare CD21	800	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Match with energetic, lively sounding kit for a successful system.	●				●	●	●	●					●			2
Primare CD31	1500	10.05/ST	★★★★★	Best CD player £1500-£2000 in Awards 2005. Sounds a treat.	●				●	●	●	●							●	Sl
Quad CD-P2	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Challenges the class-leaders in every area - sounds refined and involving.	●					●		●	●	●				●	●	Sl
Quad CD-S	650	11.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Looks a class leader on paper but disappoints with an overly safe sound.	●					●		●						●	●	Sl
Rega Jupiter	1098	03.03/ST	★★★★☆	Smooth, rich and detailed - this machine's warmth will appeal to many.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Roksan Caspian M series-1	1100	11.04/GT	★★★★★	A canny piece of kit and well worth the money - real class-contender.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Roksan Kandy MkIII	650	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Not bad by any means but at this price it now gets left in the shade.	●				●			●						●		6
Sugden Bijou CD Master	1299	11.01	★★★★☆	Cute with plenty of weight and authority, but bass lines can sound slow.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Tube Technology Fusion CD64	1990	11.03/FT	★★★★★	It looks distinctive and sounds lovely - buy the tailor-made lead.	●				●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	2
Unison Research Unico CD	1195	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Gives you plenty of bang for your buck, but don't pair with bass-heavy kit.	●				●		●	●	●							St

BUDGET £2001 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	TYPE: Multidisc	TYPE: Transport	TYPE: DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Audionet ART V2	2400	01.04/FT	★★★★★	A big sound that allows long listening, not short on detail or dynamics.	●				●		●	●								2
Chord Electronics Choral One	2995	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great looking and superbly built - it sounds good too.	●				●			●						●		2
Denon DCD-SA1	5000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Pair with the PMA-SA1 amp and the right speakers for gorgeous sound.	●				●	●	●	●							●	Sl
Linn Ikemi	2200	04.00/FT	★★★★☆	Precise and punchy sound, but we'd expect slightly more at this price.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Bk
Moon Eclipse	5950	04.00/FT	★★★★☆	Very worthy machine that can be breathtaking when carefully partnered.	●				●		●	●	●					●	●	2
Naim CDS3/XPS2	7540	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best CD player over £2000 in Awards 2004. Fully justifies frightening price.	●							●				●		●	●	Bk
Naim CDX2	2800	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Musical entertainer of the highest order, and it is easily upgradeable.	●							●				●		●	●	Bk
Resolution Audio Opus 21	2850	06.04/FT	★★★★★	This is the best disc spinner we've seen anywhere near this price.	●						●	●	●					●	●	3
Sony SCD-XA9000ES (SACD)	2400	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	This CD/SACD player excels in many areas, and is solid in every sense.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●		2
Sugden Masterclass	2700	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent - superb when combined with the Masterclass amplifier.	●				●			●	●					●		Sl
TEAC D-70	5000	12.03/FT	★★★★★	With the P-70 CD transport this is up there with the finest around.				●			●		●	●					●	Bk
TEAC P-70	5500	12.03/FT	★★★★★	P-70/D-70 combo - a contender for the best player in the world.			●		●	●	●	●	●	●					●	Bk

Recorders

Archive your favourite tunes with a recorder to suit your system

BUDGET Up to £1500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	FORMATS: CD-R	FORMATS: CD-RW	FORMATS: Minidisc	FORMATS: Hard disk	FORMATS: Cassette	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Line in	Coax digital out	Optical digital	Headphone out	Dolby	Dolby HXPro	Remote	No. of heads	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions SP150	150	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Amiable CD storage/player solution, especially for non-PC owners.				●								-		●	-	Sl
Denon CDR-W1500	450	02.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Twin-tray machine - it's too expensive, so can't compete with rivals.	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●		2
Pioneer CT-S250	150	08.97	★★★★☆	Sensibly-priced and capable of good results. Cheaper rivals.					●			●				B/C			2	Bk
Pioneer CT-W606DR (Dual)	200	08.01	★★★★☆	Good budget buy for making faithful tape-to-tape copies.					●			●			●	B/C	●		2	Bk
Pioneer CT-W806DR (Dual)	300	10.97	★★★★☆	Highly recommended in Awards 1997. Great fun and innovative.					●		●	●				B/C	●		2	
Pioneer MJ-D508	200	07.02	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Great for recording pop music.			●			●	●	●	●		●	-			-	Bk
Pioneer PDR-609	280	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Product of the Year in Awards '02. Good, but rivals have overtaken.	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	-			-	Bk
Sony MDS-JE480	130	09.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable deck for the money - does a good job of recording.			●				●	●								2
TEAC V-1050	180	09.98	★★★★★	Great price - everything a home recording fan could ask for.					●						●	B/C	●		3	Bk
Yamaha CDR-HD1500	600	11.05/FT	★★★★★	A neat way of getting into hard-disk music for non-PC owners.	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●					Bk
Yamaha KX-393	160	09.98	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2001. Still produces excellent results.					●			●			●	B/C	●		2	Bk
Yamaha KX-580SE	250	08.01	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Quality copies and good sound.					●			●			●	B/C/S	●		2	Bk

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Kef	iQ 2C	Centre Speaker		DEAL	SALE CALL
Kef	iQ 6C	Centre Speaker		DEAL	SALE CALL
Mission	M-CUBE	5.1 Speaker Package With Sub	0% APR	DEAL	£999.99
Mj Acoustics	PRO50	Subwoofer 100w		DEAL	£299.99
Mj Acoustics	REF100	Subwoofer 120w		DEAL	£349.99
Mj Acoustics	REF200	Subwoofer 200w	0% APR	DEAL	£649.99

AMPS & RECEIVERS UP TO 40 TO CHOOSE FROM!††

Arcam	AVR300	7.1ch Receiver 100 Watts X 7	15% Free Goods Offer	DEAL	£1,299.99
Arcam	SOLO	DVD Cd Dab Receiver	15% Free Goods Offer	DEAL	£999.99
Denon	AVR1906	7.1ch Receiver 80 Watts X 7		£329.99	£299.99
Denon	AVR2106	7.1ch Receiver 90 Watts X 7	0% APR	DEAL	SALE CALL
Denon	AVR2805	7.1ch Receiver 100 Watts X 7	0% APR	DEAL	SALE CALL
Denon	AVR3806	7.1ch Receiver 120 Watts X 7	0% APR	DEAL	SALE CALL
Pioneer	VSX415	5.1ch Receiver 80 Watts X 5		£199.99	£154.99
Pioneer	VSX915	7.1ch Receiver 100 Watts X 7		£359.99	£256.99
Pioneer	VSX1015	7.1ch Receiver 120 Watts X 7	0% APR	£549.99	£427.99
Pioneer	VSXAX2AVS	7.1ch Receiver 140 Watts X 7	0% APR	£799.99	£649.99
Pioneer	VSXAX4AS	7.1ch Receiver 150 Watts X 7	0% APR	£999.99	£829.99
Yamaha	RXV457 BLK/SIL	6.1ch Receiver 85 Watts X 6		£299.99	£219.99
Yamaha	RXV657 BLK/SIL	7.1ch Receiver 95 Watts X 7		£459.99	£309.99
Yamaha	DSPAX757SE	7.1ch Amplifier 100 Watts X 7	0%APR	£499.99	£359.99
Yamaha	RXV1600	New Model Due In Nov	0% APR	DEAL	SALE CALL
Yamaha	RXV4600	7.1ch Amplifier 130 Watts X 7	0%APR	DEAL	SALE CALL

Panasonic

TX32LXD52 Brand New
32" LCD TV inc Stand & HDMI

- **1/2 Price Matching DVD Rec!**
- 26" Version Also Available
- Built in Digital Tuner with Freeview
- XGA Panel 1366x768 Pixels
- Viera Colour Management System

Freeview digital HDMI HD ready 0% APR **£DEAL**

Panasonic

PTAE700 Award Winning
LCD Projector

- 1280 x 720 pixels

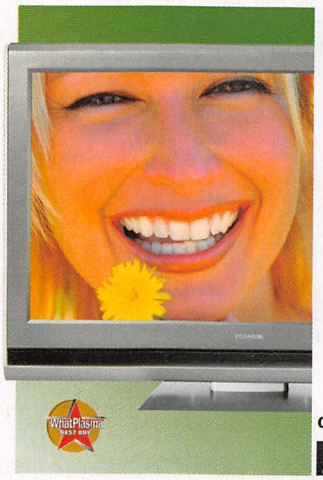
HDMI HD ready 0% APR TMMP £1699.99 **£999**

Panasonic

DMRES20 Award Winning DVD
Recorder with Freeview

- PAL Progressive Scan

Freeview TMMP £349.99 **£209**



TOSHIBA

32WLT58 Award Winning
32" LCD TV inc Stand & HDMI

- Integrated Digital Tuner
- Active Vision LCD Picture Processing
- New Slim Design Speaker
- HDMI x 2, SCART x 3 (RGB x 2), Component x 1

£1069

37WLT58 Award Winning
37" LCD TV WIth Freeview & HDMI

- Features as above

£DEAL

digital 0% APR HD ready HDMI Freeview

ARCAM

DV79 Award Winning
DVD Player

- What HiFi said *"Best DVD player £750-£1000 in 2004 awards"*
- **15% free goods offer. Ask for details**
- PAL & NTSC progressive scan
- DD, DTS, Dolby Pro Logic II & DVD-Audio
- 12-bit 216 MHz video DACs

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005 DVD PLAYERS ARCAM DV79 — WHAT HI-FI? NOVEMBER 2004
HD ready 0% APR **£999**

ARCAM

AVR300 Award Winning
Home Cinema Receiver

- What HiFi said *"Stunning with the DV79 DVD player!"*
- **15% free goods offer. Ask for details**
- 7x 100 watts per channel
- Dolby Digital EX, DTS ES, DTS 24/96 & Dolby Pro logic IIx decoding

WHAT HI-FI? AUGUST 2004
0% APR **£1299**

Panasonic

TH37PV500 Brand New
37" Plasma TV with HDMI

- 42" Version Also Available
- Viera Colour Management System
- Smart Sound Speaker System
- Built in terrestrial tuner
- 3 x SCART connections

Freeview digital HDMI HD ready 0% APR **£DEAL**

JVC

LT32DS6 Brand New
32" LCD TV With Freeview & HDMI

- What HiFi said *"Sizzling set..."* Also Available in 26" & 37" Versions
- WXGA 1366 x768 pixels
- Colour management system

Freeview digital HDMI HD ready 0% APR TMMP £1799.99 **£1069**

Panasonic

TX26LXD500 Award Winning
26" LCD TV inc Stand & HDMI

- XGA Panel 1366x768 Pixels
- Viera Colour Management System
- Nicam Stereo
- What HiFi Said *"Panasonic's Best Ever Small Screen LCD Won't Disappoint"*

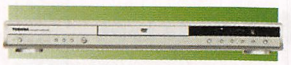
Freeview digital HDMI HD ready 0% APR **£DEAL**

TOSHIBA

37WL56 Award Winning
37" LCD TV inc Stand & HDMI

- What HiFi Said *"Very Solid LCD Buy ... & Fine Value Too!"*
- Resolution -- WXGA 1280 x 720
- HDMI x 1, SCART x 2, Composite x 1
- 32" Version Also Available 32WL56

HDMI HD ready 0% APR TMMP £1799.99 **£1359**



TOSHIBA

SD350 Award Winning
DVD Player With HDMI

- Multiregion only £89 inc Delivery!

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005 DVD PLAYERS — WHAT HI-FI? SEPTEMBER 2005 — HDMI
TMMP £99.99 **£79**

TOSHIBA

SD150 Award Winning
DVD Player

- Multiregion only £49 inc Delivery!

WHAT HI-FI? AUGUST 2005 — BEST IN CLASS
TMMP £79.99 **£39**

ARCAM

SOLO Brand new
CD/AMP & DAM Tuner

- What HiFi said *"Excellent all round sound"*
- **15% free goods offer. Ask for details**
- CD text, CD-R and CDRW transport
- Based on award-winning DiVA CD73
- 24-bit Wolfson DAC

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR ARCAM SOLO — WHAT HI-FI? MARCH 2005 — BEST IN CLASS
0% APR **£999**

"Thank you very much. First class service from Hi Spek." Mr E.Thomas

"Thank you very much for your prompt response." Mr R.Cox

"Hi Spek offered a good service and were always friendly and polite." Mr R.Thomas

Hi SPEK

SONY

KDLV32A12 Brand New 32" LCD TV inc Stand & HDMI

- Resolution 1366x768 pixels
- Dolby Virtual (Prologic II) and BBE Digital
- PAL 3D Comb filter

WEGA

Freeview digital HDMI

HD ready 0% APR £DEAL

SONY

KDLS40A12 Brand New 40" LCD TV inc Stand & HDMI

- Also Available in 23", 26" & 32" Versions
- 1366 x 768 resolution
- Dolby Virtual and BBE Digital
- Electronic Programme Guide

Freeview digital HDMI

HD ready 0% APR £DEAL

SONY

RDRVX410 DVD Recorder with VHS VCR

- DV Input (I.LINK)
- Compatible with +R Double Layer Disc (8.5 GB Disc)

TMMP £349.99 £DEAL

SONY

RDRHX510 Award Winning DVD Recorder With Hard Drive

- What HiFi said *"A great performer"*
- Available in Multiregion Version

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005 BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO £DEAL

SONY

RDRHX710 Award Winning DVD Recorder With Hard Drive

- What HiFi said *"It performs superbly"*

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005 Freeview £DEAL

SONY

RDRHXD910 Brand New DVD Recorder With Freeview & Hard Drive

- Built in 250GB Hard Disc

Freeview HDMI WHAT HI-FI? NOVEMBER 2005 HD ready 0% APR £DEAL

SONY

DAVDZ500F Award Winning DVD Home Theatre System

- What HiFi Said *"It's a Barnstorming Performer!"*
- Total 1000w (143 x 5 + 285w)
- Sub & 5 Micro Satellite speakers

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005 TMMP £449.99 £359

SONY

NWA1000 6gb MP3 Walkman

ORDER NOW ON 01727 791133

- Space for up to 4,000 songs with up to 20 hours battery life.

£149

SONY

NWA3000 20gb MP3 Walkman

ORDER NOW ON 01727 791133

- Space for up to 13,000 songs with up to 35 hours battery life.

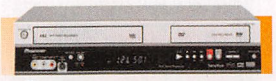
£179

Pioneer

RCS77H Brand New DVD Recorder With Hard Drive & Home Cinema Sys

- 160Gb Hard drive
- Dolby Digital, Pro-Logic 2 & DTS

TMMP £799.99 0% APR £499



Pioneer

DVRRT601 3-In-1 DVD Recorder, Hard Drive & VHS VCR

- 80GB Hard Disk Drive
- Copy directly from VHS to DVD
- Dual Layer Disc Recording

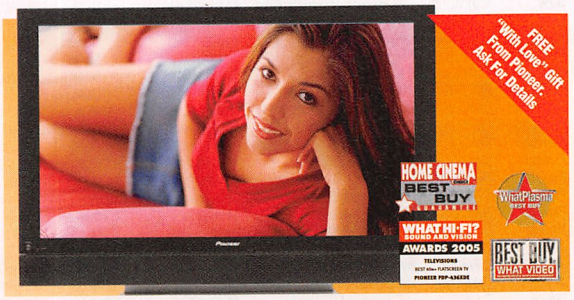
TMMP £499.99 £299

Pioneer

DVR630 Award Winning DVD Rec With Hard Drive & Freeview

- 250GB Hard Disk Drive

BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO 0% APR £359



Pioneer

PDP436XDE Brand New 43" Plasma TV With HDMI inc Media Box

- 720p, 1080i/1080p compatible
- PureBlack Crysatl Layer Technology
- Direct Colour Filter
- PC input with XGA Resolution

PURE digital 0% APR

HD ready HDMI Freeview £DEAL

InFocus ScreenPlay

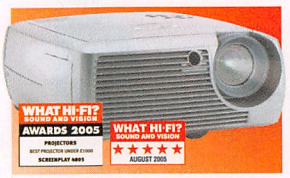
7210 Award Winning Home Theatre Projector

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 PROJECTORS BEST PROJECTOR UNDER £7000-£4000 SCREENPLAY 7210

The latest and most innovative star in InFocus' award winning home theater lineage, the ScreenPlay 7210 delivers amazing technology advances and award-winning components, available only from InFocus.

- 7205 & 7210 also available and call into St. Albans for a demo!

0% APR £DEAL



InFocus ScreenPlay

4805 Award Winning Home Theatre Projector

- What HiFi said *"Best projector under £1500"*
- *1024x768 resolution*
- *Component and RGB HDTV (720p, 1035i, 1080i)*

TMMP £999.99 HD ready 0% APR £DEAL

((AE)) ACOUSTIC ENERGY

EVO 3B Award Winning Speaker Package

- Fantastic deals on Acoustic Energy Evo Range
- What HiFi said *"Best full-size speaker package under £1000 in 2004 awards"*

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 BEST FULL-SIZE SPEAKER PACKAGE UNDER £1000 Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 30

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ JULY 2002 0% APR TMMP £949.99 £649

athena

MICRA 6 New Speaker Package With 5 Satellites And Active Subwoofer

- Introducing the amazing new MICRA system from athena TECHNOLOGIES®. A complete 6 piece music and home theater system that is designed to complement your lifestyle

0% APR £399

BOSE

321 GSX Home Theatre System

- **Trade In Your Old DVD Player And Save Up To £400**
- Digital 5.1 decoding
- GEMSTONE™ speaker arrays
- TrueSpace™ surround digital processing circuitry

0% APR £DEAL

BOSE

LIFESTYLE 18 Lifestyle System

- **Trade In Your Old DVD Player And Save Up To £400**
- 5 VIRTUALLY INVISIBLE® cube speakers
- Powered ACOUSTIMASS® module
- BOSE® link technology
- ADAPTiQ® audio calibration system
- DTS® and Digital 5.1 decoding

0% APR £DEAL

BOSE

SOUNDOCK Brand New Docking Station for Apple iPOD

- Fantastic Docking Station For Your iPOD Mini
- Infrared Remote
- Active Electronic Equalization
- Slim profile and small footprint take up very little space

£249

BOSE

LIFESTYLE 38 Brand New Lifestyle System

This high-performing Lifestyle® DVD system digitally stores up to 200 hours of music and adds life to movies. Includes progressive scan DVD/CD player and Direct/ Reflecting® cube speaker arrays.

- **Trade In Your Old DVD Player And Save Up To £400**

0% APR £DEAL

BOSE

AM15 Home Theatre Speaker System

- **Trade In Your Unwanted DVD Discs And Save Up To £150**

0% APR £DEAL

Hi SPEK

HOME THEATRE & HIFI SPEAKERS UP TO 80 TO CHOOSE FROM! ††

Bose	LIFESTYLE 28	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Trade In Deal Upto £400 Off!	DEAL	SALE CALL
Bose	LIFESTYLE 48	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Trade In Deal Upto £400 Off!	DEAL	SALE CALL
Bose	321 CLASSIC	DVD Lifestyle System	Trade In Deal Upto £400 Off!	DEAL	SALE CALL
Bose	321 GSX	DVD Lifestyle System	Trade In Deal Upto £400 Off!	DEAL	SALE CALL
Bose	321 II	Dvd Lifestyle System	Trade In Deal Upto £400 Off!	DEAL	SALE CALL
Denon	DHT500SD	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Multiregion Available	£499.99	£399.99
JVC	THR3	With Built In DVD Recorder	Multiregion Available	£499.99	£399.99
Philips	HTS3300D	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Multiregion Available	DEAL	£149.99
Pioneer	RCS55	DVD/rec Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Multiregion Available	£459.99	£319.99
Pioneer	RCS77	DVD/HDD Rec Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs+sub	Multiregion Available	£714.99	£499.99
Panasonic	SCHT530	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Multiregion Available	£229.99	£159.99
Panasonic	SCHT880W	With DVD Rec & Tallboy Spkrs	Multiregion Available	£599.99	£429.99
Sony	DAVDZ700F	With DVD Recorder Wireless Spkrs	Multiregion Available	£549.99	£449.99
Sony	DARRH1000	With DVD Rec& 160gb Hard Drive	Multiregion Available	£999.99	£799.99
Sony	DARRH7000	With DVD Rec & 250gb Hard Drive	Multiregion Available	£1,299.99	£1,049.99
Yamaha	TSS15	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Amazing Value	£199.99	£149.99
Yamaha	DVXS30	DVD Centre + 2 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Multiregion Available	DEAL	£529.99
Yamaha	DVXS250	DVD Centre + 5 Sat Spkrs + Sub	Multiregion Available	£499.99	£379.99

DVD PLAYERS & RECORDERS UP TO 80 TO CHOOSE FROM! ††

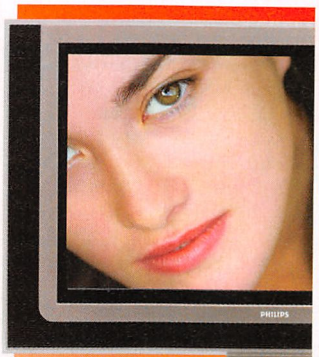
Denon	DVD2910	DVD Player Also In Multiregion	Multireg Avail	£649.99	£499.99
Denon	DVD3910	DVD Player Also In Multiregion	Multireg Avail	£899.99	£699.99
Pioneer	DV585	DVD Player Full Size	Multireg Avail	£159.99	£99.99
Sony	RDRGX210	DVD Recorder	Multireg Avail	£229.99	£159.99
Sony	RDRGXD310	DVD Recorder,freeview	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Sony	RDRHX510	DVD Recorder,80gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Sony	RDRHXD710	DVD Recorder,160gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Sony	RDRHXD910	DVD Recr,freeview,250gb Hard Dr	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Panasonic	DMRES10	DVD Recorder	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Panasonic	DMRES20D	DVD Recorder With Freeview	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Panasonic	DMRES30V	DVD Recorder/vhs Combi	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Panasonic	DMREH50	DVD Recorder,80gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Panasonic	DMREH60	DVD Recorder,80gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Panasonic	DMREH80	DVD Recorder,160gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Toshiba	RDXS24	DVD Recorder,160gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Pioneer	DVR230	DVD Recorder	Multireg Avail	£245.95	£159.99
Pioneer	DVR433HS	DVD Recorder,80gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Pioneer	DVR530HS	DVD Recorder,160gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Pioneer	DVR630HS	DVD Rec, Freeview,250gb Hard Dr	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
Pioneer	DVR930HS	DVD Recorder,400gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	DEAL	SALE CALL
JVC	DRMX1	DVD Rec,160gb Hd, Vhs Vcr	Multireg Avail	£549.99	£399.99
JVC	DRMH200	DVD Recorder,160gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	£395.99	£299.99
JVC	DRMH50	DVD Recorder,250gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	£549.99	£399.99
Philips	DVDR3320	DVD Recorder/VCR Combi	Multireg Avail	£329.99	£259.99
Philips	DVDR3305	DVD Recorder	Multireg Avail	£259.99	£149.99
Philips	DVDR3300	DVD Recorder,80gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	£329.99	£269.99
Philips	DVDR7300	DVD Recorder,160gb Hard Drive	Multireg Avail	£499.99	£379.99

AUDIO PRODUCTS UP TO 150 TO CHOOSE FROM! ††

Denon	DM33S	Mini Hifi System With Speakers		DEAL	£269.99
Denon	DM33	Mini Hifi System Without Speakers		DEAL	£199.99
Denon	DM35DABS	Mini Hifi System With Speakers		DEAL	£339.99
Denon	DM35DAB	Mini Hifi System Without Speakers		DEAL	£269.99
Denon	201CDS	Mini Hifi System With Speakers	0% APR	£699.85	£630.99
Denon	201CD	Mini Hifi System Without Speakers	0% APR	£659.99	£512.99
Denon	DRR201	201cd Matching Cassette Deck		£199.99	£158.99
Denon	DF101S	Mini Hifi System With Speakers		£449.94	£380.99
Denon	DF101	Mini Hifi System Without Speakers		£329.99	£296.99
Denon	DRRF101	Df101 Matching Cassette Deck		£149.96	£126.99
Teac	REF300DABMKII	Micro Hifi Dab System	0% APR	DEAL	£479.99
Teac	MCDX10MKII	Mini Hifi System With Speakers		DEAL	£149.99
Pure	EVOKE1XT	Portable Digital Dab Radio	Award Winner!	£109.99	£89.99
Pure	EVOKE 2 XT	Portable Digital Dab/fm Radio	Award Winner!	£149.99	£139.99
Pure	SONUS1XT	Portable Talking Digital Radio	Award Winner!	£119.99	£109.99
Sony	NWE105	Portable Flash Memory Walkman 512mb	Free Delivery!!	£89.99	£64.99
Sony	NWE107	Portable Flash Memory Walkman 1gb	Free Delivery!!	£109.99	£84.99
Sony	NWE403	Portable Flash Memory Walkman 256mb	Free Delivery!!	£99.99	£74.99
Sony	NWE405	Portable Flash Memory Walkman 512mb	Free Delivery!!	£109.99	£84.99
Sony	NWE407	Portable Flash Memory Walkman 1gb	Free Delivery!!	£149.99	£114.99
Sony	NWE507	Portable Flash Memory Walkman 1gb	Free Delivery!!	£189.99	£139.99
Sony	MZRH710	Portable Hi-md Walkman	Free Delivery!!	£159.99	£109.99
Sony	MZRH910	Portable Hi-md Walkman + Remote	Free Delivery!!	£219.99	£139.99
Sony	MZDH10P	Hi-md Walkman + Chargingcradle	Free Delivery!!	£329.99	£239.99
Sony	NWHD5	Portable 20gb Hard Disk Walkman	Free Delivery!!	£229.99	£179.99
Sony	NWA1000	6gb Network Walkman	Free Delivery!!	DEAL	£149.99
Sony	NWA3000	20gb Network Walkman	Free Delivery!!	DEAL	£179.99

PROJECTORS UP TO 20 TO CHOOSE FROM! ††

Panasonic	PTAE700EC	Home Theatre Projector	0% APR	£1,699.99	£999.99
Sony	VPLES2	Home Theatre Projector	0% APR	£899.99	£649.99
Sony	VPLHS50	Home Theatre Projector	0% APR	£1,999.99	£1,529.99
Screenplay	ALL MODELS	See Offer Panel In This Ad	0% APR	DEAL	SALE CALL



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 — BEST LCD/PLASMA TV 30-36IN — Philips 32PF9986

HOME CINEMA Best Buy

BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO

PHILIPS

26PF5520D 26" LCD TV With Freeview & HD Ready

- Pixel Plus
- Virtual Dolby Surround
- Compact slim design
- Full range of Philips LCD TV's available!

Freeview digital HDMI

HD ready 0% APR

TMMP £999.99

£739

KEF KIT100 Award Winning Home Cinema System

- DTS decoder, Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro Logic II
- DVD Player
- Digital Tuner
- Plus Free Stand Worth Up To £150 What HiFi said *"Best home cinema in a box over £1000"*

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 — BEST HOME CINEMA IN A BOX OVER £1000 — KEF KIT 100

TMMP £1199.99

£DEAL

PHILIPS

32PF9986 Award Winning 32" LCD TV & Stand

The ultimate viewing experience of Ambilight and Pixel Plus 2 pushes picture quality to a new level. The unprecedented viewing comfort of Ambilight, LCD technology and invisible flat NXT speakers culminate in a daring and innovative design.

- High definition LCD WXGA display, resolution 1366 x 768p
- Pixel Plus 2 for better detail, depth and clarity
- Call now for amazing deals on 37PF9986 & 42PF9986!

HD ready 0% APR

TMMP £2499.99

£1399

SHARP

LC32P50 Brand New 32" LCD TV With Stand & HD Ready

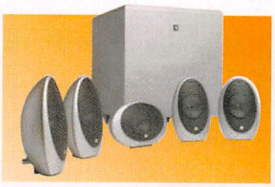
- Advanced Super View
- Black TFT
- Nicam/A2 Stereo & Surround Sound
- Also available in 26" & 37" versions
- Built-in Teletext

Freeview digital

HD ready 0% APR

TMMP £1299.99

£779



KEF 1005 Award Winning Speaker Package

- Satellites feature 3inch UniQ with 0.6in tweeter
- Power handling 100W, sensitivity 86dB, impedance 8ohms
- Freq. response: 120Hz - 22KHz

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 — COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES

0% APR

TMMP £499.99

£299

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 — PHILIPS 32PF9830

NEW!

PHILIPS

32PF9830 32" LCD TV With Stand

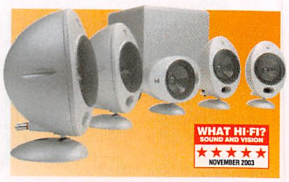
- **Save Up To £100 When Bought With Qualifying DVD Recorder**
- Resolution 1366 x 768 Pixels
- Pixel Plus 2 HD
- 2 Channel active Ambilight

Freeview HDMI

HD ready 0% APR

TMMP £2999.99

£DEAL



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOVEMBER 2003

KEF KHT2005.2 Award Winning Speaker Package

KHT 2005.2 has taken things a step further, with a comprehensively upgraded specification that brings listening enjoyment to a new level: perfect sound, wherever you are.

- Comprises 5 x Satellite Speakers and Subwoofer

0% APR

TMMP £799.99

£499

KEF iQ5 Award Winning Speakers

NEW!

- Full Range Of KEF iQ Speakers In Stock. Call for fantastic deals!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 — PRODUCT OF THE YEAR — KEF iQ5

0% APR

TMMP £399.99

£DEAL

The Very Best Deals and Great Service

Established for over 20 years Hi-spek are one of the country's leading independent specialists. We have a reputation for providing the best products, professional and friendly service and incredibly low prices. Plus we hold stock!!

Free Delivery

We deliver to anywhere on the UK mainland FREE (some highland areas are excluded). Subject to availability most deliveries are next day although some larger orders may take 2-4 days. Please ask for details on 01727 791133.

Interest Free Credit 0% APR

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Visit or call us for expert advice & live demos on some of the latest and newest products and technologies. No appointment is necessary and our in store consultants will be pleased to assist.

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"This level of service is quite rare these days and is much appreciated..." Mrs G Keys

"I could not have wished for a better or more prompt response.." Mrs R. Wheeler

"Thank you...I'm impressed with the way this problem has been handled" Mr T. Mc Laughlin

"..Such after sales service is rarely seen these days..thank you!" Mrs P. Bailey

"would not hesitate to use Hi-Spek again or recommend to a friend!" Mrs J. Hart

NEW!

YAMAHA

RXV4600 brand New Home Cinema Reciever with HDMI

- 7 Channel high power amp config
- 5.1 Channel external decoder input
- 5 Optical, 3 coax & 2 optical inputs
- Pure Direct Switch
- Matching DVDS2500 Also Now In Stock!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 BURROUND AMPS/RECEIVERS YAMAHA RX-V4600 HDMI 0% APR TMMP £999.99 £DEAL

NEW!

YAMAHA

YSP800 Award Winning Sound Projector

The YSP-800 applies sophisticated Digital Sound Projector™ Technology to precisely control the orientation of the sound by focusing it into beams. The sound is both direct and reflected off the walls so the listener hears sound from the front, sides and back. The result is true multi-channel surround sound that sounds just like a multi-speaker system --- without the need for extra speakers!

- Brand New YSP1000 Also Now In Stock!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR YAMAHA DIGITAL SOUND PROJECTORS 0% APR TMMP £599.99 £DEAL

NEW!

YAMAHA

DSPAX757SE Brand New Home Cinema Amplifier

- Replaces award winning DSPAX750SE
- 7-Channel 700W Surround Sound
- What HiFi said *"Frighteningly good for the money!"*

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005 BEST IN CLASS WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE 0% APR TMMP £499.99 £359

NEW!

YAMAHA

RXV657 Award Winning Home Theatre Receiver

- 7.1-Channel, 665W (95W x 7 RMS)
- Powerful Surround Sound
- Digital ToP-ART and High Current Amplification
- Pure Direct for High Quality Sound Reproduction

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOVEMBER 2005 0% APR TMMP £459.99 £309

YAMAHA

AV57 PACKAGE Home Theatre System

- Ideal Combination for 5.1-Channel Movie Sound Formats
- Inc 5.1 Chanel Receiver With Remote.
- All Speaker Cables Included
- 6-Speaker Package Consisting of 4-Satellite (Front L/R, Surround L/R), Center Speakers and Subwoofer
- Excellent Sound Quality and Smart, Compact Design

£199

NEW!

DENON

AVR1906 Brand New Home Cinema Receiver

- 7-channel A/V-Receiver with On Screen Display and Pro Logic IIx What HiFi said *"It's the best by miles"*
- Dolby Digital & DTS decoding
- 6 Channel ext input

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ OCTOBER 2005 WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 BURROUND AMPS/RECEIVERS BEST SURROUND RECEIVER UNDER £700 DENON AVR-1906 TMMP £329.99 £299

DENON

DHT500SD Award Winning Home Theatre System

- Dolby Pro Logic IIx Decoding
- 6-channel Digital Power Amp
- What HiFi said *"All in one system product of the year in awards 2004"*
- Multiregion version also available

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2004 HOME CINEMA Best Buy BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS DENON DHT-500SD 0% APR TMMP £499.99 £399

DENON

DM35 DAB New Micro System With DAB Digital Radio

- Available With Speakers Only £319.99
- Quality DAB/FM
- MP3 & WMA CDR Support
- 22 Watts per Channel
- Audiophile grade capacitors for better sound
- Maximum power capacity 120 W / 60 W

£249

NEW!

DENON

AVR3806 Brand New AV Receiver

- Fully Discrete, Equal Power Seven Amplifier Channels with 160 W (6 ohms) each
- Dolby Pro Logic IIx, Dolby Digital and DTS decoder, DTS 96/24
- Replaces Highly Acclaimed AVR3805
- Available in Black/Silver & Gold

0% APR £DEAL

NEW!

DENON

DVD1920 Award Winning DVD Player

- HDMI with HDCP Digital Video
- HDMI with Scaling from Silicon
- Image 480p/720p/1080i
- Latest Faroujda DCDi PAL Progressive Scan
- DVD-R/RW (DVD-Video Mode) Playback

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR DVD PLAYERS DENON DVD-1920 HDMI 0% APR £DEAL

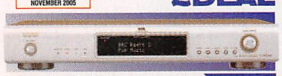
NEW!

DENON

AVR2106 Award Winning Home Theatre Receiver

- Fully Discrete, Equal Power Seven Amplifier Channels with 125 W (6 ohms)

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOVEMBER 2005 £DEAL



NEW!

DENON

TU1800 DAB Award Winning DAB Tuner

- High Quality D/A convertor featuring 192kHz /24bit DACs Optical and Coaxial outputs

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOVEMBER 2005 £DEAL

NEW!

DENON

S301 Home Cinema System

- 2.1 speaker system, with amplifiers located in subwoofer
- A/V receiver featuring Dolby Virtual Speaker technology
- HDMI output with selectable scaling (480p/720p/1080i) decoders

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS BEST HOME CINEMA IN A BOX DVD-S301 DENON SMART LIFE S-301 0% APR TMMP £1249.99 £DEAL

NAD

C352CT Award Winning Amplifier

- What HiFi said *"Product of the year awards 2004"*

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR STEREO AMPLIFIER NAD C352CT £349

NAD

C542 Award Winning CD Player

- What HiFi said *"Maintains NAD's impressive run of affordable separates"*

C521 CD Player	£179
C320BEE Amplifier	£199
C372 Amplifier	£437

£299

MJ ACOUSTICS

REF 100 Award Winning Subwoofer

- What HiFi said *"...Quality Sub..."*
- 120watt DC-coupled Bi-Polar Amplifier
- Q Series now on sale. Call for fantastic deals!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2004 £DEAL

PURE

SONUS 1XT Award Winning Digital Radio

- World's first DAB digital radio with iVOX™ voice feedback technology
- Free delivery to your doorstep!

DRX702ES	£229
EVOKE 1 XT	£89
EVOKE 2 XT	£139

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 TECHNOLOGY BEST BUY SONOS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ MAY 2005 £109

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We are committed to giving you the best possible deals. Due to the nature of this industry prices given here can change... normally downwards, occasionally upwards. The offers and promotions can also change as this advert is finalised a few weeks before it goes on sale. Please call us on any telephone number given here or check our website for the latest price information. Omissions and errors excepted. E & OE.

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Mon 26th Dec .....10am - 6pm
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Sat 31st Dec .....9am - 6pm

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or visit **www.music-at-home.co.uk**

*Please quote reference WHF06aa (UK only)

Music servers

One smart hard-drive box to hold all your tunes and fill your home with music

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Capacity (GB)	Max (GB)	RECORDING: Uncompressed	RECORDING: MP3	RECORDING: Max MP3 data rate	INPUTS: Coaxial	INPUTS: Optical	INPUTS: Line	OUTPUTS: Coaxial	OUTPUTS: Optical	OUTPUTS: Line	OUTPUTS: Zones	OUTPUTS: Wireless built-in
Cyrus Linkserver Solo	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★½	Probably the best-sounding system of its kind, but it's expensive.	80	800	●	●	320	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	
Sonos Digital Music System	899	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005. A work of genius.	-	-			-			●			●	32	●

Sonos Digital Music System

Hats off to Sonos for a producing a product that genuinely breaks the mould – it's an amazingly effective combination of wireless music routing and multiroom distribution. It is easy to install and even easier to use – a truly seamless wireless operation with terrific sound quality. The hottest thing to hit hi-fi in years.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
TECHNOLOGY
BEST BUY
SONOS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM

Yamaha MusicCAST server	1800	11.03	★★★★★	Wireless multiroom system - coolest product we've tested in years.	80	2000	●	●	320	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	●

Music server clients

Link with a music server and deliver tunes to every room in the house

BUDGET Up to £1,000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Coaxial	INPUTS: Optical	INPUTS: Line	OUTPUTS: Coaxial	OUTPUTS: Optical	OUTPUTS: Line	Built-in amp Tuner FM/AM	Wireless built-in
Apple AirPort Express	89	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2004.					●	●		●
Netgear MP101	75	05.05/GT	★★★½☆	Appealing price and offers a lot but the performance disappoints.						●		●
Opus Tech. Opus System	5740	UGHF/05	★★★★★	Fine sound from this fairly easy to install multi-room solution - tested with the Marantz DH9300.		●			●	●	●	●
Pinnacle Showcenter	200	10.05/FT	★★★★½	Wirelessly sends video content such as MPEG2 and DivX films from your PC to TV.			●	●	●			●
Roku SoundBridge M1000	180	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Excellent performance and features - a class-leading network music player.			●	●	●			●
Sonneteer Bardthree	500	Awd05/FT	★★★★½	Super-simple, non-compressed wireless music delivery system - sounds very good.						●		●
Sonneteer BardUSB	240	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Wirelessly sends music held on a computer to your hi-fi and doesn't forget good sound.		●			●			●

Apple AirPort Express

The AirPort Express was the winner of our first ever Technology Product of the Year Award in 2004. We honoured this innocuous little gadget because it's the missing link between your computer and your hi-fi. Play any MP3 file on your Wi-Fi-enabled computer and it's wirelessly transmitted to your hi-fi via AirPort - genius!

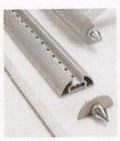
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TECHNOLOGY
APPLE AIRPORT EXPRESS

Turntables

Turntables still offer fantastic sound quality and awesome value-for-money

BUDGET Up to £14000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SPEEDS: 33 ⅓ rpm	SPEEDS: 45 rpm	SPEEDS: 78 rpm	Elec spd change	Man. operation	Auto operation	Semi-auto op.	Tonearm incl.	Cartridge incl.	Belt drive	Direct drive	Suspension	Finishes
Audio Note TT1/Arm 1/IQ1	900	11.01/ST	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Affordable, well built and sounds great.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Audio Note TT2+Arm 2+I/Q1	1417	08.01/FT	★★★★½	You'll need the £2499 transformer, but you'll be rewarded with superb sound.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Audio Note TT2+Arm 2+IQ3	1600	05.03/GT	★★★★½	Well engineered, versatile deck - sounds solid with any kind of recording.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Avid Acutus	6000	10.99/FT	★★★★★	This steel wheel cruises effortlessly through everything from jazz to rock.	●	●			●					●		●	2
Avid Diva package	1748	Awd04/FT	★★★★½	Beautifully built and delivers composed, informative sound.	●	●		●	●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Avid Volvere	2000	08.01	★★★★½	Tested with SME V arm/Dynavector D17 D2 II cartridge. Deserves your attention.	●	●			●					●		●	Sl
Bush MTT1	50	02.96/FT	★★★★★	Build quality is lacking but the mini-sized Bush manages to astound sonically.	●	●					●	●		●			Bk
Clearaudio Ambient	4040	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Beautifully built, and a joy to hear. Tested with Satisfy arm and Concerto cartridge.	●	●		●	●					●			Wd/Al
Clearaudio Champion L1	1365	02.04/GT	★★★★½	Combines stunning aesthetics with great sound - well worth an audition.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Acr



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Designed without compromise

Henley Designs, 01235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 226

RICHER Sounds

THE UK'S HI-FI, HOME CINEMA & FLAT PANEL TV SPECIALISTS

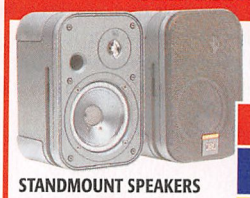
OUR LEGENDARY, ONCE A YEAR GENUINE SALE...

PANASONIC DVDS29

DVD PLAYER
Featuring PAL and NTSC playback, this super slimline DVD player is a bargain and a half! Grab one while you can!
TSP £69.95

SALE! WERE £59.95
£30 OFF TSP
£39.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £9.99

JBL CONTROL 1



STANDMOUNT SPEAKERS
These beautifully made compact speakers are used by the world over. These are a massive bargain! TSP £119.95

DEAL!
£70 OFF TSP
£49.95 PAIR!
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £9.99

KEF Q6C

CENTRE SPEAKER
Save a massive amount of cash on this incredibly smooth and culutered centre speaker!
TSP £149.95

SALE! WERE £99.95
£100 OFF TSP
£49.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £9.99

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO A1

AMPLIFIER
"A bargain piece of hi-fi with a magic all of its own."
- What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine.
TSP £99.95
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ Nov '04

DEAL!
£20 OFF TSP
£79.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £9.99

KEF CRESTA 30

Pic. Approx

SPEAKERS
"Neat-looking cabinet." - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £199.95

SALE! WERE £149.95
£100 OFF TSP
£99.95 PAIR!
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

JVC THS33

HOME CINEMA SYSTEM
As a good-looking and equally well performing system, JVC's THS33R is one for the short list. Superb value for money.
TSP £199.95

SALE! WERE £149.95
£100 OFF TSP
£99.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £49.99

YAMAHA RXV357

AV RECEIVER
"The sound produced is nicely balanced and impressively dynamic...a top performer for the money" - - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £199.95

SALE! WERE £139.95
£100 OFF TSP
£119.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

TEAC CR-H230

MINI STEREO SYSTEM
Teac are known as making some of the finest music systems, and the CR-H230 is no exception. TSP £249.95

SALE! WERE £199.95
£130 OFF TSP
£119.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £29.99

SAMSUNG DVDH950

HDMI DVD PLAYER
MULTI-REGION
"A great-sounding, decent-looking universal player that sounds superb" - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £149.95

SALE! WERE £129.95
£30 OFF TSP
£119.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

HI-FI SYSTEM SUPERDEAL!

CD PLAYER: AZUR 540C
TSP £199.95 **Available in silver & black**
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ Aug '05

AMPLIFIER: AZUR 540A
TSP £199.95 **Available in silver & black**
50 WPC
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ Aug '05

STANDMOUNT SPEAKERS: KEF CRESTA 10
TSP £149.95
100 WPC

Take two multi Best Buy winning products and team them up with a top-notch pair of speakers for stunning stereo sound. Suitable for every type of music from rock through to opera. These classy separates are what your living room or bedroom have been crying out for!

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THE UK'S HI-FI, HOME CINEMA & FLAT PANEL TV SPECIALISTS

PANASONIC DMRES10

Remote Control

DVD RECORDER
4 quality settings and the ability to record on DVD-R, DVD-RW and DVD-RAM, this "best buy" machine has all you need from a budget recorder. TSP £239.95

SALE! WERE £169.95
£100 OFF TSP
£139.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £29.95

TANNOY FX5.1

What Video widescreen TV BEST BUY

SPEAKER PACKAGE
"The verdict? Superb." - What Video magazine. TSP £479.95

5.1 SPEAKER PACKAGE INCLUDES ACTIVE SUB

DEAL!
£280 OFF TSP
£199.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640C v.2

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

Remote Control

CD PLAYER
"Details levels are exceptional for the money."
- WHAT HI-FI? S&V magazine.
Available in silver & black

DEAL!
AMAZING VALUE!
£249.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640A

65 WPC

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 BEST BUY HI-FICHOICE

Hi-Fi World ★★★★
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Jun '04

Remote Control

AMPLIFIER
"Offering finesse and clout in equal measure."
- WHAT HI-FI? S&V magazine.
Available in silver & black

DEAL!
AMAZING VALUE!
£249.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

YAMAHA DSPAX757

100 WPC

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Sep '05

Remote Control

AV ELECTRONICS
"The DSP-AX757SE? Buy one today - it's fabulous!"
- WHAT HI-FI? S&V magazine.
TSP £499.95

SALE! WERE £449.95
£150 OFF TSP
£349.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £49.95

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640H

Remote Control

160GB HARD DISC DIGITAL RECORDER
An audiophile quality hard-disk server which incorporates the high-quality CD player from the Azur 640C.

DEAL!
AMAZING VALUE!
£599.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £99.95

PHILIPS 26PF9946

Remote Control

26" LCD TV
Crystal Clear technology brings the ultimate TV experience! TSP £999.95

HI-RES SCREEN

SALE! WERE £649.95
£450 OFF TSP
£549.95
3YR PANEL PROTECTION ONLY £54.95

PHILIPS BDS4241

Remote Control

TV tuner/ media box may be required

42" PLASMA TV
This is a branded plasma panel at a rock-bottom price. Exp. Dec. TSP £1499.95

DEAL!
£500 OFF TSP
£999.95
3YR PANEL PROTECTION ONLY £99.95

HITACHI 42PD6600

Remote Control

HD ready

Includes FREE Hitachi stand + speakers

42" PLASMA TV
High-definition technology at an all-time low price. Bag this bargain today! TSP £1999.95

SALE! WERE £1699.95
£600 OFF TSP
£1399.95
3YR PANEL PROTECTION ONLY £139.95

PIONEER PDP436FDE

Remote Control

HD ready

Includes FREE Pioneer speakers+desk top stand worth £300 + AV media box/tuner

42" PLASMA TV
Get cleaner, sharper images with this classy Pioneer High Definition TV. TSP £3299.95

SALE! WERE £2199.95
£1200 OFF TSP
£2099.95
3YR PANEL PROTECTION ONLY £209.95

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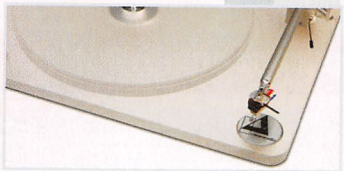
Turntables continued...

Turntables still offer fantastic sound quality and awesome value-for-money

BUDGET Up to £14000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SPEEDS: 33 1/3 rpm	45 rpm	78 rpm	Elec spd change	Man. operation	Auto operation	Semi-auto op.	Tonearm incl.	Cartridge incl.	Belt drive	Direct drive	Suspension	Finishes
Clearaudio Emotion package	655	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Turntable Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Thrilling dynamics.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Ac



Clearaudio Emotion package

Last year's Product of the Year continues to thrill and delight every time we listen to it. Sonically refined and exciting, the Emotion Package is rhythmically impeccable, and visually stimulating.Tested with the very capable Satisfy tonearm and Aurum Classics Wood cartridge – cracking value for money.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TURNTABLES
CLEARAUDIO EMOTION PACKAGE

Clearaudio Master Ref/TQ-I	12610	08.01	★★★★★	For those who have the money and the desire this is one of the very best.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Acr
Clearaudio Solution	1085	06.99	★★★☆☆	Distinctive looks with frosted acrylic platter, but its rivals highlight its weaknesses.	●				●					●			Acr
Goldring GR1/Elektra	140	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Basic looks, but produces a lively, forward and engaging sound.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk
Goldring GR2/1012GX	265	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Best turntable £150-£500 in Awards 2005. Detailed and rich sounding delivery.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk
Linn Sondek LP12	1400	07.93	★★★★☆	Entry-level legend sounds extraordinarily persuasive, and is easily upgraded.	●			●	●					●		●	5
Linn Sondek LP12/Lingo	2300	Awd.94	★★★★★	Best turntable in Awards 1994 - has a warmth and faithfulness few can match.	●	●		●	●					●		●	5
Michell Gyrodec	1370	02.94	★★★★☆	An eye-catcher which performs at a level that is hard to beat at the price.	●	●			●			●		●		●	Sl
Michell Gyrodec SE	940	05.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Class-leading, few rivals get near its style or sound.	●	●			●					●		●	Sl
Michell Orbe SE	2116	06.01/GT	★★★★★	Big on bass, the Orbe combines striking looks with absolutely stunning sound.	●	●			●					●		●	Bk
Michell TecnoDec+HR pow sup	890	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Sounds wonderfully musical and impressively revealing, and is simple to set up.	●	●			●					●			Bk
Michell TecnoDec/Rega RB250	699	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Without the HR power supply the TecnoDec becomes a more compelling buy.	●	●		●	●			●		●			Bk
Nottingham Analog. Anna Log	6451	08.97	★★★★★	30kg of cast iron and 17th-century timber - possibly the best turntable available.	●	●			●					●			Wd
Nottingham Analog. Interspace	587	06.96	★★★★★	Remarkable musicality and low cost (at least in high-end terms) make it a bargain.	●	●			●					●			Bk
Origin Live Aurora	970	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Tough setup, but a stellar performer with a wonderfully realistic presentation.	●	●		●	●					●			2
Origin Live Aurora Gold	1470	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	A great value deck that delivers a strong performance at a competitive price.	●	●		●	●					●		●	2
Origin Live Sovereign	3850	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Sublime - expensive but it sounds better than CD players anywhere near this price.	●	●		●	●			●		●		●	Bk
Pro-ject 1 Xpression	250	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Great-value deck and sounds remarkable.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			Gry
Pro-ject 2 Xperience	550	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Laid-back and relaxed performer - ideal for longer-listening sessions.	●	●			●			●		●			Pers
Pro-ject Debut III Phono SB	225	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Award-winning turntable with a built-in phono stage - simple but effective.	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●			2
Pro-ject Debut III/Orto OM5E	130	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best turntable under £150 in Awards 2005. Incredible value.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			9
Pro-ject Perspective	750	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	An impressive option, despite a lot of strong competition at this price-point.	●	●		●	●			●		●		●	Ac
Pro-ject RPM 6 SB	500	12.03/FT	★★★★☆	An added speed box to the RPM 6 SB results in a fine-sounding, user-friendly deck.	●	●	●	●	●			●		●			Bk
Pro-ject RPM9X	1000	04.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good and if you enjoy a big, bold performance, it's really exceptional.	●	●			●			●		●			2
Rega P2	198	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Impressive performer that sounds rather more expensive than actually it is.	●	●			●			●		●			Bk
Rega P3	298	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2001. The finesse of decks that cost twice as much.	●	●			●			●		●			8
Reson Rota 1/Reson Reta/Etile	3100	05.00/FT	★★★★★	Terrific if you buy for your ears rather than your eyes - precise and punchy.	●				●			●	●	●			Ac
Roksan Radius 5 (wood finish)	750	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Solid performer that hardly puts a foot wrong. Deserves to be on the audition list.	●	●			●			●		●			3
Roksan Radius V/Nima arm	850	07.04/GT	★★★★★	An excellent deck - even more talented than the wood version we tested last year.	●	●			●			●		●		●	Ac
SME Model 20/2A	4713	09.96	★★★★☆	The precision makes it worth seeking out, but rockers may be tempted elsewhere.	●	●	●	●	●					●		●	Bk
SOTA Comet Sup/RB300/Plati	650	11.01/ST	★★★☆☆	Offers an attractive sonic performance, but finish and cosmetics are below par.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
SOTA Millennia	4750	05.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fabulous-sounding deck that brings out the magic of any LP collection.	●	●		●	●					●		●	Bk
Sound By Design Quasar LE/CG	3990	08.97	★★★★☆	An unusual approach to turntable design, but one which works really well.	●	●			●					●		●	Go
Technics SL1210 MK5G	550	05.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Bomb-proof DJ deck, but it loses out on a strictly sound-per-pound basis.	●	●		●	●			●	●		●		Gy
VPI HW-19 Junior	550	03.98/GT	★★★★★	A truly involving listen and peerless at this price. Includes a Rega RB300 arm.	●	●			●			●		●			Bk
Wilson Benesch The Full Circle	2100	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Best turntable £1000-£3000 in Awards 2005. Digs up plenty of detail.	●	●			●			●	●	●			

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★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
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Month/GT= Group Test

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GLOSSARY
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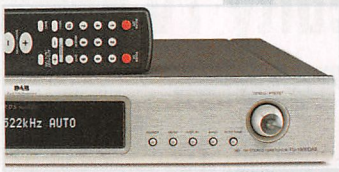
Tuners & portable radios

Take your pick from digital, analogue or hybrid tuners

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	BANDS DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	Presets	Auto tune	RDS	Remote	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions Portal 2	80	08.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Portable that looks pretty but the sound is only average.		●				6				Sl
Acoustic Solutions SP111	100	02.04/FT	★★★★☆	If you can't afford to spend more on a hybrid tuner, this is an attractive option.	●	●				4	●	●	●	Sl
Alba TRDAB2820(portable)	50	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cracking build quality coupled with good connectivity and sound.	●	●				10	●			Wt
Arcam DiVA DT91	450	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	All virtue and no vice, a no-brainer for Arcam fans, but it comes at a hefty price.	●	●				16	●		●	Sl
Arcam DiVA T61	230	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine tuner with a smooth and generous sound. But it faces tough competition.		●	●			30	●	●		2
Aria A-2000(portable)	140	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	A decent radio that scores well for its connections, style and simplicity of use.	●	●				6	●	●	●	2
Boston Recepter Radio(port)	130	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	A high-quality clock radio which delivers surprising bass depth, well worth an audition.		●	●			20				3
BT Aviator (portable)	95	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features including 10 min record facility - but the sound doesn't inspire.	●	●				10				Bk/Sl
Bush DABCR2003(portable)	70	01.04/GT	★★★★★	Bargain if you like to fall asleep to - and be woken by digital-only radio stations.	●					10	●			Sl
Bush PSDAB2003(handheld)	100	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Cheap and decent personal with sporting appeal, but it can't match the best..	●					10				Blu
Bush TR2003DAB(portable)	100	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	A uniquely-styled radio which produces the goods sonically - we love the looks.	●	●				10	●			Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 640T	200	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Decent piece of kit to top off the Azur range - bold and expressive performance.	●	●				20	●	●	●	2
Cambridge Audio DAB300	120	05.03/FT	★★★★★	No-nonsense digital tuner that's both a fine performer and a great-value buy.	●					10	●			2
Cambridge Audio DAB500	150	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Fine sound quality with good bass and crisp treble.	●					10	●		●	2
Creek T50	550	03.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine-sounding FM tuner, if a little pricey. Best with a sizeable external aerial.		●	●	●		64	●	●		Sl
Cymbol Electronics C-DAB1	1499	02.00	★★★★☆	Digital tuner that shines with classical concerts, thanks to its revealing sound.	●					8	●			Sl
Cyrus FM X	500	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	One for the FM radio purist. A stripped down spec, but capable of superb sound.		●				29	●			2
Denon TU-1800DAB	250	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi DAB/FM tuner in Awards 2005. Refined and full-bodied sound.	●	●	●			200	●	●	●	Sl



Denon TU-1800DAB

First analogue and now digital: Denon really has found the secret to making top-notch tuner separates. Sonic results are extremely impressive with a good level of detail thanks to its clear and relatively uncompressed delivery. Saving your favourite stations isn't a problem, either – there are 200 presets.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
RADIOS
BEST HI-FI DAB/FM TUNER
DENON TU-1800 DAB

Denon TU-260L MK II	130	04.00	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Good value for money and makes a fine upgrade		●	●	●		40	●	●		Bk
Densen Beat B-800	850	04.04/FT	★★★★★	Best analogue tuner in Awards 2004. This no-frills Danish tuner sounds superlative.		●				99				2
Freeplay Devo (portable)	100	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Wind-up as well as mains re-charging - neat idea, great for camping or caravaning.	●	●				5				Sl
Hitachi TRK100DAB (portable)	75	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Poor digital performance so unless FM is more important save yourself sonic strife.	●	●				10	●			Wt
Intempo KT-01(portable)	80	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Tough, available in various colours and sonically capable.	●	●				8	●			3
Intempo KTM-01(portable)	125	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Unique kitsch design sold exclusively via John Lewis, part of the price goes to charity.	●	●				8				Pink
Intempo PG-01(portable)	90	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good for the money with stereo sound. Worth considering, but it is mains only.	●	●				4	●			Wd
Linn Pekin	650	10.01	★★★★★	The laidback sound is easy on the ear, but detail and dynamics remain plentiful.		●	●			80	●		●	Bk
Min of Sound DR011(handheld)	65	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish handheld unit that plays music pretty persuasively and is involving with speech.	●					10	●			Sl
Morphy Richards DAB EPG	170	11.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Electronic-programme-guide is a neat idea, but the sound is flawed.	●	●				14		●		Sl
NAD C422	190	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Works well enough and sounds good for the money. A no-nonsense option.		●	●			30		●	●	2
Naim NAT05	825	10.01	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. The NAT05 proves radio still has the power to amaze.		●				99	●			Bk
Nevada ND-01(pocket)	80	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best handheld radio in Awards 2005. Excellent value for money.	●	●				12				Sl
Panasonic RF-B55(portable)	119	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Worldband tuner promises plenty, but doesn't satisfy. Frustratingly dull look and feel.		●	●	●	●	54	●			Bk
Panasonic RF-D1(portable)	99	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Retro look might not suit all, but it is easy to use and the sound is reasonable.	●	●				20	●			Sl
Philips DA1000(handheld)	150	07.04/GT	★★★★★	A tidy and compact personal DAB tuner with a very good level of performance.	●	●				20				Sl
Pure Digital DRX-701ES	190	10.02/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2002. A quality home tuner for digital radio.	●					99	●		●	2
Pure Digital DRX-702ES	250	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Delivers digital and analogue in style.	●	●	●			99	●		●	2
Pure Digital Elan(portable)	70	02.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Sound lacks weight and punch and it feels cheap - a major disappointment.	●	●				16	●			Al
Pure Digital Evoke-1XT (port)	100	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Best DAB portable in Awards 2005. Great value.	●					6	●			2
Pure Digital Evoke-2XT(port)	150	10.05/GT	★★★★★	DAB/FM portable Product of the Year Awards 2005.	●	●				12	●			Wd
Pure Digital Oasis	120	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Weatherproof with connection-covers so you can treat this rich-sounding radio rough.	●					4	●			Al
Pure Digital Pocket DAB1000	110	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This go-anywhere personal companion has the sound quality to live up to its style.	●					10	●			Sl
Pure Digital Pocket DAB2000	200	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Disappointing - feels cheap and sounds characterless.	●	●				20				Sl
Pure Digital Sonus-1 XT(port)	120	06.05/GT	★★★★★	The sound, the build quality, and the fact that it talks to you makes this a winner.	●					6	●			Wd
Pure Digital Tempus-1(port)	100	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	An Evoke-1 with a touch sensitive snooze handle for improved bedside manner.	●					10	●			Wd
Pure Digital The Bug (port)	130	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Not class-leading sound but its ability to pause and rewind radio is tempting.	●					6	●			2
Roberts Gemini 1(portable)	200	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great performer in all areas, but the price tag is just too hefty to entirely justify.	●	●				12				Sl
Roberts Gemini 6(portable)	180	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Solid-sounding and easy to use with a well-designed remote: will grace any household.	●	●				10	●	●	●	Wd
Roberts Gemini 8(portable)	140	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Handy features but it's cheap to the touch, and cost too much.	●	●				5	●	●		Bwn
Roberts Gemini 9(mains radio)	120	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Fair as a clock radio but it's left floundering by more conventional DAB kit.	●	●				10	●	●		Sl
Roberts Gemini RD-11(port)	140	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Well-equipped, sounds great and is good value. Records for 40 minutes too.	●	●				10		●		Wd/Lth
Roberts R9965(portable)	80	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Delivers a deep, sturdy performance in keeping with its quirky bomb-proof design.		●	●	●		0				Gry
Roberts R9988(handheld)	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	No-nonsense portable analogue radio that offers supreme performance for the cash.		●	●	●		0				Gry
Sony ICF-M410L(portable)	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	A no-nonsense radio, ideal for the bedroom, featuring great sound and style.		●	●	●		20				Sl
Sony ICF-SW100e	180	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Classy and unusual worldband tuner which packs a lot into a neat leather carrying case.		●	●	●	●	50	●			Bk
Sony SRF-M10(handheld)	65	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Ultra-small and stylish with some handy facilities, but sonically it fails to deliver.		●				0				Sl
T+A T1210R	100	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid premium-priced performer that will appeal to FM-only radio fans.		●						●		2
TEAC T-1D	200	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	Ideal companion for the C-1D CD player and the A-1D amplifier.		●	●			30	●	●		Sl
TEAC T-H300DAB	200	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Fine match for TEAC's Reference Series, though the sound quality isn't special.	●	●	●			30	●	●	●	Sl
Tivoli iPAL	139	02.05/GT	★★★★★	Plug your iPod into this new version of the Award-winning radio for great sound.		●	●			0				Wt

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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NN-V673 Stainless Steel 900w With Grill	£69	£99
NN-A554 White Slimline Dim 4	£79	£99
NN-A574 S/Steel Slimline Dim 4	£99	£129
NN-A775 S/Steel 27L Dim 4	£99	£149
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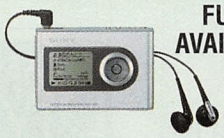

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WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOV 04

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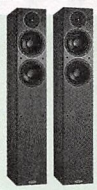

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★☆ AUG 99

"the Tannoy R2s are heavy speakers, cabinet mass-loaded, solidly built and have a lovely real wood veneer. Tonally the Tannoys are smooth and full, giving them a weight that escapes lesser rivals." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Aug 99**

150watts Handling • Sensitivity 88db
920x170x235mm • Black Ash

1/4 PRICE
Also Highly Reviewed Celestion E3 **£149**

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~~WAS £399.99~~ **£99.99** Ex display model

Kef PSW1000

save £130

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ JUN 01

"The PSW-1000 uses a single downward-firing 210mm bass driver, and has a good array of socketry, including both line and speaker level inputs and outputs, a phase invert control (for easier positioning in the room) and conventional rotary controls for volume and crossover." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Jun 01**

Superb 100 Watt Powered Subwoofer
Frequency Res 40Hz-180Hz
Full Magnetic Shielding • 350x320x320mm
Deluxe Black Ash Finish

1/4 PRICE
Also Dark Apple or Cherry

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Mission m7s

save £200

"The sound from the m7s is as dramatic and beautiful as it looks" **Mission Loudspeakers Mar 05**

Stylish 6 Speaker AV Package
Fully Shielded 5x 100w Satellite Speakers • 100w Super Power Subwoofer • 8 Ohms • 88db Sensitivity • Superb Anthracite Finish

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Also Matching Stands **£49**
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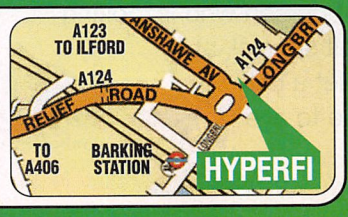

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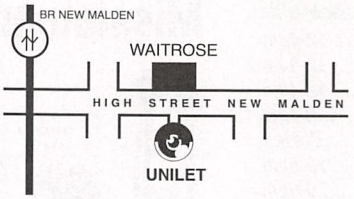

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Unilet Sound and Vision

The Hidden Hi-Fi Store

Tuners & portable radios continued...

Take your pick from digital, analogue or hybrid tuners

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	BANDS DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	Presets	Auto tune	RDS	Remote	Finishes
Tivoli Model 3	200	02.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Analogue clock radio - it looks gorgeous and sounds good, but at £200 it's expensive.		●	●			0				Wd
Tivoli Model DAB	230	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Highly desirable - fantastic retro styling and excellent clarity with a full weighty tone.	●	●				5				Wn
Tivoli Model One	100	07.04/FT	★★★★★	It may only be mono, but this is a lovely little radio that looks and sounds great.		●	●			0				5
Tivoli PAL(portable radio)	130	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Excellent performance from this sexy portable radio.		●	●			0				8
Xfm Digital Radio(portable)	130	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great styling, sound and plenty of useful features - just a bit pricey.	●	●				10	●			Wt
Yamaha TX-396L	130	10.00	★★★☆☆	Inoffensive if somewhat bland sound - will fit into a wide range of systems with ease.		●	●	●		40	●			Bk
Yamaha TX-492RDS	150	04.98	★★★☆☆	Good facilities and performance at a sensible price but not truly outstanding.		●	●			40	●	●		Bk

Integrated amplifiers/receivers

One-box powerhouses to drive your speakers – with or without tuners

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Int amp	Receiver	Power out (w)	Line level in	MM phono	MC phono	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speakers	Tone controls	Headphone	Remote	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions SP101	80	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	If your budget is really tight this product would be a good first step.	●		35	5	●		1	●	1	●	●		Sl
Arcam DiVA A65 Plus	400	07.03/ST	★★★★☆	Still a fine buy, just doesn't dominate the budget market any more.	●		40	4	●		1	●	1	●	●	●	Sl
Audio Analogue Primo Settanta	475	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Tidy amp with exquisite vocal delivery and tuneful bass.	●		70	5			1		1			●	Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 540A	200	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Ideal building-block on which to build a fantastic budget system.	●		50	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Cambridge Audio Azur 640A	250	06.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier under £500 in Awards 2005. Fine dynamics.	●		65	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Denon DRA-455	200	08.01/FT	★★★★★	Good value and it sounds great. Even the phono stage is acceptable.		●	52	2	●		1		2	●	●	●	Bk
Denon PMA-255UK	140	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting amp for your money - care is needed with system matching.	●		30	4			1		1	●	●		Bk
Denon PMA-355UK	230	12.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Had a good run but has met its match with the sub £300 amps now.	●		50	3			2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Focal-JMlab iCUB	450	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Hybrid amplifier/sub - add speakers and an MP3 player for hi-fi playback.	●		75	1			0		1			●	Bk
Marantz PM7200	330	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. The Marantz is still a strong contender.	●		95	4	●		2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Marantz PM7200 KI	500	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well-equipped and sounds refined - best for classical or vocal-based music.	●		95	4	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
Marantz SR4320	250	06.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Unusual beast but for all its merits it is an ultimately uninspring performer.		●	80	7	●		1	●	2		●	●	2
Myryad Z140	500	05.03/ST	★★★★☆	The Z140 will appeal to vinyl-lovers, but it needs punchy partnering kit.	●		50	4	●		2		1		●	●	2
NAD C320BEE	220	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2002. High-quality, big sounding amp.	●		50	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
NAD C352	350	06.04/FT	★★★★★	Stereo amplifier Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	●		80	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
NAD C372	500	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Real disappointment - lacks detail, dynamics and finesse.	●		150	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	Bk
Onkyo A-933	500	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Tested with the C-733 CD player - sonically they can be bettered.	●		80	4	●		1	●	1		●	●	Sl
Pioneer A-209R	150	04.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Solid-enough for the money, but rivals offer more for a similar price.	●		35	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Pioneer A-307R	180	12.99/ST	★★★☆☆	The Pioneer's full-on sound lacks subtlety and can be fatiguing.	●		45	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Rega Brio	328	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Not an amplifier for everyone, but in the right circumstances it'll shine.	●		38	3	●		1		1				2
Rotel RA-01	250	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Great build and exciting presentation.	●		40	4	●		1	●	2	●	●		2
Rotel RA-02	380	09.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Cracking amp, powerful and vibrant sound.	●		40	4	●		1	●	2	●	●	●	2
Rotel RA-03	500	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Stereo amplifier Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Superb all-rounder.	●		70	4	●		1	●	1	●	●	●	2

Rotel RA-03

A wonderfully self-effacing amp that excels at almost everything. Dynamics are far stronger than the ouput would suggest and timing, midrange clarity and resolution are very good indeed. This is a superb all-round performer that works well with a wide range of systems and music – top-class build, too.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO AMPLIFIERS
ROTEL RA-03

Sony TA-FB940R	350	12.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000 - natural, attention-grabbing sound.	●		70	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
TEAC A-ID	280	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	Makes sense when viewed as a companion for the C-1D CD player.	●		50	5	●		2		1	●	●	●	Sl

OASIS

RECHARGEABLE WEATHERPROOF DAB RADIO

- Over 15 hours battery life from built-in battery system
- Weatherproof and splash resistant
- Stereo input for connecting your iPod, MiniDisc or CD player
- Headphone socket
- USB connector for future updates

PURE

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
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GLOSSARY
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HI-FI CHOICE READERS' AWARDS DEALER OF THE YEAR 2003/04

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All shops are closed on Sundays and Mondays

KEF KIT200

KEF

An all-in-one solution to every modern home's cinema needs, the KEF Instant Theatre 200 has thundered in to the arena hailing, "black is back." Encased in a slick gloss black exterior, the KIT200, is a highly stylised package that is designed to stand out as well as to blend in. Specifically crafted to match new style flat screens, this system will subtly compliment an existing set up as well as becoming a centre piece for your entertainment needs.

Far from having to rely on its image alone, the KIT200 has got the performance to match. Its 250mm omni-directional subwoofer and high powered 3 way speakers deliver a performance with enough impact for an explosive action flick and enough subtlety for the most demanding orchestral arrangement.

Comprising of a DVD player with an inbuilt FM/AM radio, 5 x Uni-Q loudspeakers, powered subwoofer and all the necessary cabling, the KIT200 will retail for £1499. Please contact your nearest Audio T or Audio Excellence KEF dealer for more information and to book a demonstration.

CHRISTMAS SALE
STARTS 17TH DECEMBER

WE ARE OPEN OVER CHRISTMAS
on 19th - 24th and 27th - 31st Dec and 3rd - 7th January

ARCAM

ARCAM AV9

Keeping up with past tradition, Arcam have made a processor that is truly future proof in every conceivable aspect. Building on the high standard set by the award winning AV8, the AV9 adds key technologies that have emerged in recent months.

With HDMI being accepted by the world's major broadcasters for high definition TV, the need for switching of these high-speed signals is paramount. The AV9 is equipped with a 5-way HDMI switch to ensure its integration with high definition devices such as DVD players, set top TV boxes and the next generation of video consoles.

A true heavyweight in every other way, the AV9 will be retailing at £3,600 and will be available before Christmas. Please contact your nearest Audio T or Audio Excellence Arcam FMJ dealer for more information or to book a demonstration.

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audio-E Club

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- And more...

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CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Tivoli DAB £229
PURE Oasis £120
Monitor Audio iDeck . £250
Roku SoundBridge M1000 ..... £180

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Offers valid until end of January 2006 (unless otherwise stated). Some products not available at all stores. Please call before travelling.

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HD ready

AUDIO T and AUDIO EXCELLENCE are now SKY dealers. That means you can pre-register in store NOW to make sure you're one of the first to receive your SKY High Definition box once they are released in 2006. Ask in store for more information.

NEW

NAIM N-VI

Designed to be an all-in-one solution for music and video, the n-Vi houses an upgradeable, high-end, DVD player, DVD-A player, CD player, Home Cinema processor, audio pre-amplifier and five channel power amplifier in an elegant single case. There are also add-on modules to provide DAB/FM radio and, in early 2006, video scaling.

In delivering the n-Vi, Naim has not forsaken its traditional values: you can expect the performance, features, build quality and attention to detail that you would get from all the company's components.

Available this Christmas, the n-Vi will retail for £2995 with the add-on DAB/FM radio module retailing for £250. Please contact your nearest Audio T or Audio Excellence Naim dealer for more information or to book a demonstration.

PRICE PROMISE

WE KNOW YOU WON'T FIND BETTER SERVICE.

WE KNOW YOU WON'T FIND BETTER SOUND.

BUT IF YOU FIND A BETTER DEAL FROM ANOTHER AUTHORISED SHOP, LET US KNOW AND AS LONG AS WE CAN VERIFY IT WE'LL BE HAPPY TO MATCH IT.

NEW

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

Roku

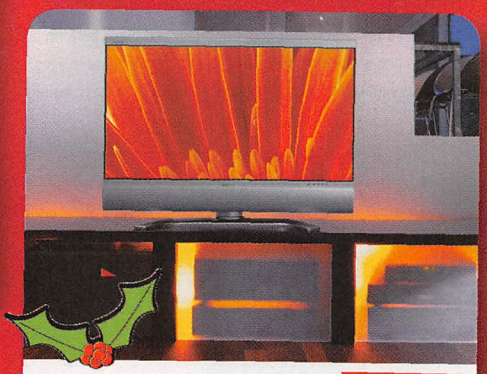
Works with iTunes

ROKU SOUNDBRIDGE

The Roku SoundBridge is a sleek networkable digital music player that lets you play your Mac or PC digital music files anywhere in the house – wirelessly bridging the gap between your stereo or powered speakers and your computer's digital music library. Almost all music formats are supported - and it is network ready with wired Ethernet or CompactFlash Wi-Fi adapter.

A large, bright display and integrated iTunes support will make this player an essential part of your home entertainment system, allowing you to quickly browse huge music collections by album, artist, genre or composer. Not only this but you can also use your SoundBridge to tune in to the thousands of internet radio stations now available. The 'EQ display' music visualiser even pulses along to the beat of your music. We all need a gimmick or two!

The M1000 retails for £180 and the M2000 for £350; the only difference between them is the size and capabilities of the display. They both include remotes and they can be mounted on the wall or on a shelf (wall mount kits £33.99). Please contact your nearest Audio T or Audio Excellence dealer for more information or to book a demonstration.



SHARP

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

SHARP LCD SCREENS

Up to now LCD TVs have suffered from poor 'off air' pictures. But now, with the advent of Sharp's new PAL panel range, the picture is optimized for UK broadcasts. Come in and see for yourself why this is the perfect time to buy a flat screen TV.

FREE GUIDE

The brand new 2006 edition of ***"Music and Movies at Home – the Ultimate Guide"*** is waiting in store for you now. To get your FREE copy call in at your local store or

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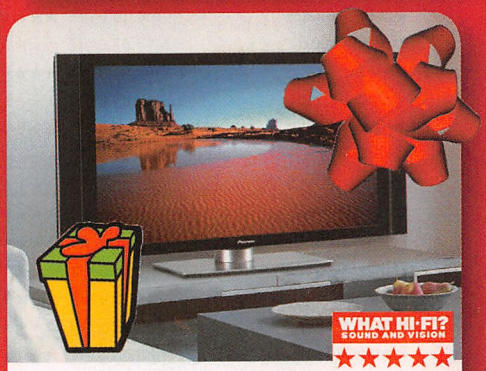

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

Pioneer

FREE PRESENTS

Buy a Pioneer plasma TV between the 1st Dec 05 and 31st January 06 and choose a FREE exciting Christmas present from the list below...

Gym Pack
Shogun Jackal Mountain Bike
Pioneer DV-230 DVD Recorder
Pioneer DEH-P770MP In-Car Headunit
Kodak C360 Digital Camera
Nokia 6020 Mobile Phone

Ever wanted the matching components to compliment your Pioneer plasma screen? We now sell the rest of the Pioneer home cinema range including the recommended products below.

VSX-AX2AV Receiver	£799
VXS-AX4AVi Receiver	£999
DV-989AVI DVD player	£899

Offers valid until end of January 2006 (unless otherwise stated). Some products not available at all stores. Please call before travelling.

Integrated amplifiers/receivers continued...

One-box powerhouses to drive your speakers – with or without tuners

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Int amp	Receiver	Power out (w)	Line level in	MM phono	MC phono	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speakers	Tone controls	Headphone	Remote	Finishes
BUDGET Up to £500																	
Yamaha AX-396	220	07.00/FT	★★★☆☆	Has all the right credentials, but it's rather anonymous and unexciting.	●		60	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bl
Yamaha AX-596	300	12.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Bold performance but trades treble detail for a smooth delivery.	●		100	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bl
BUDGET £501 and over																	
Arcam DiVA A80	630	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Incisive and musical presentation, beautiful build and slick looks.	●		65	5	●		1	●	1		●	●	Sl
Arcam DiVA A90	850	10.04/ST	★★★☆☆	Flexible and warm but ultimately, this amplifier sounds anonymous.	●		90	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
Arcam FMJ A32	1200	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	The FMJ A32 is a flexible product with good sound and masses of features.	●		100	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Audio Analogue Maestro Sett.	1750	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Worth considering: the sound is entertaining and the build is superb.	●		70	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Audio Analogue Puccini Settanta	950	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Top of the class when it comes to looks. Muscular, powerful sound, too.	●		70	4	●	●	1		2			●	Sl
Audio Note Meishu	3787	06.96	★★★★☆	Delivers the goods at low levels and excels with acoustic music.	●		8	4			1		1				
Audio Note Oto SE	1600	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	Partner sensibly and this Audio Note amplifier will please like little else.	●		10	4			1						Bk
Audio Note Soro SE	2600	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Blows valve stereotypes of excess warmth and soggy bass into the weeds.	●		20	4			1		1				Bk
Audionet SAM V2	2400	07.02/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive - it isn't flawless, but its strengths are considerable.	●		110	5			1	●	1				2
AVI Laboratory Series	1499	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1400-£3000 in Awards 2004. Digs deep.	●		200	6			1	●	1			●	Bk
Bryston B100 SST	2850	Awd05/GT	★★★★★	Stonking amplifier that performs well irrespective of musical genre.	●		100	7			1	●	1	●	●		Bk
Bryston B60	2000	02.00/FT	★★★★☆	No-nonsense, it simply gets on with the task of reproducing music.	●		60	4			1		1		●		
Chord Elect CPM 2600(+ Int legs)	3535	04.03/FT	★★★★☆	Fine amp - few rivals can match its power, speed and resolution.	●		120	6			2	●	1			●	Sl
Creek A50iR	595	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Very good amp for the money - combines simplicity and performance.	●		50	4			1		1			●	Sl
Cymbol Electronics CA1	999	01.98/ST	★★★★☆	A competitive design from the Brits which sounds fresh, fast and exciting.	●		40	5			1	●	1				Sl
Cyrus 6vs	650	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Super entry-level amp - if you're a Cyrus fan, you'll love it.	●		40	6			1	●	1			●	2
Cyrus 8vs	850	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £800-£1400 in Awards 2004. Swoonly good.	●		70	6			1	●	2		●	●	2
Cyrus 8vs/PSX-R	1250	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Strapping on a PSX-R to the 8vs takes the sound quality to new heights.	●		70	6			1	●	2		●	●	2
Denon PMA-SA1	5500	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Pair with DCD-SA1 CD player and the right speakers for gorgeous sound.	●		50	8	●		2		1				Sl
EAR/Yoshino V20	3430	11.98/GT	★★★★★	Stunning valve amp with top quality sonics. Choose speakers with care.	●		25	5			0		1				Sl
Eclipse TD A502	875	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Looks like nothing else - one of the best options in this price range.	●		30	1			0		1				Sl
Electrocompaniet EC1-3	1000	10.04/ST	★★★★☆	Competitive - warm, even-handed sound and remarkable soundstage.	●		75	5			1	●	1			●	Bk
Exposure 2010s	599	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	For good, honest musical fun this makes a lot of sense. A fine amp.	●		75	5			1	●	1			●	2
Exposure 3010	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	A good performer with a rich and creamy sound.	●		100	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
GRAAF GM50 (valve)	3950	08.04/FT	★★★★★	Fantastic - good enough to put other similarly priced amps to shame.	●		50	4			2		1			●	Bk
Inca Design Talon	700	10.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Not without merit or charm but it's a fundamentally unengaging listen.	●		80	4			0		1			●	Sl
Krell KAV-400xi	2498	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Accomplished all-rounder with power, refinement and good build.	●		200	4			1	●	1			●	2
Moon I-3	1595	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Strong performer with a distinctive sound that's easy-going.	●		100	6			0	●	2			●	Bk
Myryad MXI2080	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1000-£1500 in Awards 2005. A remarkable amp.	●		80	5			1	●	1			●	2
Myryad MXI2150	1700	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Look past its appearance because it sounds absolutely lovely.	●		150	6			2		1			●	2
Naim Nait 5i	699	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Relentlessly musical with real verve - compatible with other brands.	●		50	4			1		1			●	Bk
Onkyo A-1VL	1100	10.04/ST	★★☆☆☆	Digital amplifier - a tiring and tiresome listen.	●		100	5	●		1	●	1			●	Sl
Orelle SA100evo	1200	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Incredibly insightful amplifier - deserves an audition.	●		80	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Pathos Classic One	1325	02.04/FT	★★★★☆	Valve/transistor hybrid that looks stunning - worth seeking out.	●		70	4			1		1			●	Bk
Pathos Logos (Valve)	2750	11.03/FT	★★★★★	Looks magnificent and sounds even better - brilliant engineering.	●		110	5			1		1			●	Gry
PrimaLuna Prologue One	849	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Superb value and a great entry into the world of valve amps.	●		35	4			0		1				Bk
Primare I21	750	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	With the Primare CD21 the sound is natural with a wide soundstage.	●		75	4			1	●	1			●	2
Primare I30	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1500-£2000 in Awards 2005.	●		100	6				●	1			●	2
Pro-ject Pre Box/Power Box	800	04.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Pre/power amp combo - not bad, but integrated rivals perform better.	●		65	4			1	●	1				Bk
Red Rose Model 5 (Valve)	7999	06.03/FT	★★★★★	Produces one of the most seductive sounds we've heard in ages.	●		45	5			1		1			●	Sl
Rega Mira 3	598	05.03/ST	★★★☆☆	We love the looks but it sounds bland alongside the class leaders.	●		61	4	●		1	●	1				2

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Integrated amplifiers/receivers continued...

One-box powerhouses to drive your speakers – with or without tuners

BUDGET £501 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Int amp	Receiver	Power out (w)	Line level in	MM phono	MC phono	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speakers	Tone controls	Headphone	Remote	Finishes
Roksan Caspian M series-1	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Solid performer that's still capable of mixing it with the class-leaders.	●		70	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Roksan Kandy MkIII	650	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Best stereo amplifier £500-£800 in Awards 2004 - but now looking pricey.	●		120	5	●		1	●	1		●	●	6
Sugden A21a	1049	04.03/GT	★★★★★	We love this hot-running machine, when well matched it'll sing.	●		25	4	●	●	1	●	1				Sl
Sugden Masterclass	3150	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Stonking performer, excellent combined with the Masterclass CD player.	●		33	3	●		1	●	2				Sl
T+A V10 (valve)	4600	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very fine performer that's capable of a pleasing slice of sonic heaven.	●		80	5			1		1			●	Sl
Tube Tech. Synergy PPS	9000	01.99	★★★★★	Gorgeous valve amp - all the convenience and power a user demands.	●		150	5			1	●	1				Sl
Tube Tech. Unisis Signature	2700	02.95	★★★★☆	Attractive valve amp; looks and great sound make it very good value.	●		35	4	●		1	●	1				Sl
Unison Research S2K (Valve)	1475	04.02/FT	★★★★☆	Offers fine build and subtle sound wrapped in a distinctive package.	●		15	4			1		1			●	Wd
Unison Research S8	3350	07.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fabulous with vocals - puts refinement ahead of sonic fireworks.	●		24	4			1		2			●	Wd
Unison Research Unico line	900	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Refined, but not prissy - an amplifier of rare ability.	●		80	4			2	●	2			●	Gry
Unison Research Unico SE	1325	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Amazing when it comes to vocals - it's just a shame about the price.	●		140	4	●	●	1		2			●	Sl

Preamps

The control section of the amp – team with a power amp or active loudspeakers

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Line Level	INPUTS: MM phono	INPUTS: MC phono	OUTPUTS: Tape loops	OUTPUTS: No of outputs	OUTPUTS: Balanced out	OUTPUTS: Tone Controls	OUTPUTS: Headphone	OUTPUTS: Remote	Finishes
Audio Analogue Bellini Rem	625	11.02	★★★★☆	An elegant and refined three-box combo - 2xDonizetti monoblocs with the Bellini.	●	●		1	2				●	Gry
Audio Note M-1 R	900	10.00/FT	★★★★★	If you want a musically talented preamp there are very few superior.	●			1					●	Sl
Cyrus PreXvs	1000	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Detailed, agile and dynamic performer that is easy to upgrade.	●			1	2			●	●	2
Densen Beat B-200	1000	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Very good - paired with the B-310 power amp it's right up there with the best at this price.	●			2	4					2
Linn Kolektor	575	07.02	★★★★☆	The LK85/Kolektor combo backs up impressive flexibility with solid sound performance.	●	●		1	3		●	●	●	Bk
Myryad MXP2000	1000	07.04	★★★★☆	Tested with the MXA2150 power amp - the only shortcomings were with this preamp.	●			1	2				●	2
Naim NAC 112x	705	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Strong combination with the NAP 150x power amp - a hugely enjoyable listen.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Parasound Halo P3	600	11.02	★★★☆☆	It's certainly talented, but the Halo P3/A23 power combo lacks some excitement.	●	●		1	2	●	●	●	●	Sl
Quad 99	750	03.05/GT	★★★★★	The 99/909 combo is a class performer that'll perform superbly in a wide range of systems.	●	●		1	1		●		●	Sl
Rotel RC1070	395	08.01	★★★☆☆	The pair RB1070/RB1080 is best suited those who want rate power over subtlety.	●	●		2	2		●	●	●	2
Sugden Headmaster	659	06.01	★★★★★	Headphone amp/preamp - a great niche product that sounds brilliant. Was £599.	●			1	3			●		Gry

BUDGET £1001 and over

Arcam FMJ C31	1200	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Bags of detail and great dynamic eloquence - with more coherence it could lead the pack.	●			2	1			●	●	2
Audia Flight	4500	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but teamed with the Flight 50 power amp it will satisfy for years to come.	●			0	2	●			●	2
Audio Note M2-phono	2000	05.01/FT	★★★★☆	The M2 and the P4 power amp combinations is capable of breathtaking sonic feats.	●	●		1	4					Bk
Audio Research LS16MKII	3199	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fine combined with the 150.2 power amp - promises years of sonic pleasure.	●			1						Sl
Audio Research SP16	2499	08.02/FT	★★★★☆	Great sound from the entry-level combo of SP16 and VS55 power amp(now discontinued).	●	●		1					●	Sl
Audionet Pre 1 G2	2100	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Not cheap but combined with Amp 1 power amp its sonic performance justifies the price.	●			1	2	●			●	2
Audiopax Model 5	3799	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great sounding preamp - just slightly let down by poor attention to build.	●			1	2				●	3
Chord Elect. CPA 4000 Enhan.	7615	05.01	★★★★★	Use with the SPM 1200E amp - they belong right at the forefront of high-end amplification.	●			2	3	●		●	●	Sl
Cyrus DACXP	2200	09.05/FT	★★★★★	DAC with a preamp built in, paired with the X Power - works fabulously.	●			1	4	●			●	2
DNM Reson 3C Primus	2100	05.01/FT	★★★★★	Superlative resolution, dynamics and timing - excellent phono stage. Tested with PA3.	●			1	1	●				Bk
DNM Series 3C Six	4100	03.99/FT	★★★★☆	Used with the DNM PA3s they merit a serious audition. Unimpressive cosmetics.	●			1	1	●				Bk
EAR/Yoshino 864	1850	Awd.01	★★★★★	Gutsy but involving valve-amp, when used with 861 power, is something special.	●	●		0	5	●				Sl
GRAAF GM 13.5B II	3995	01.00	★★★★★	Partner with GM20 power amp for a truly magical valve combination. Brings music to life.	●			1	6	●				Bk
Linn Exotik	1750	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Combine with the 2250 power amp for great looks and feel - sonic abilities fall short.	●			1	8				●	2
Moon P-3	2850	Awd.01	★★★★☆	Beautifully built, the P-3/W-3 combination puts long-term listenability before attack.	●			1	2	●			●	2
Naim NAC 202	1455	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Naim's pairing of this preamp with the NAP200 power amp is very tempting indeed.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Naim NAC 282	2945	09.04/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a music buzz that few rivals can match - paired with the NAP 200 and Hi-Cap.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Primare Pre30	1200	01.03	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. With A30.2 has a powerful, warm, generous sound.	●			1	3	●			●	Bk
Roksan Caspian M-series	1250	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1400-£3000 in Awards 2004 with two Caspian M-series monoblocs.	●	●		1	3					Sl
Usher P-307A	1250	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Paired with the R1.5 power amp this is impressive.	●	●		1	2					2

Power amps

Supplies the music muscle to the loudspeakers – just add a pre-amp

BUDGET Up to £800

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Stereo	Mono	Power (w)	Bridgeable	Phono in	XLR in	Finishes
Audio Analogue Donizetti Mono	525	11.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Elegant and refined three-box combo - 2 x this monobloc plus the Bellini preamp.		●	100		●		Gry
Linn LK85	545	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	The LK85/Kolektor combo backs up impressive flexibility with solid sound performance.	●		62		●		Bk
Moth 30 Series Power	275	09.92	★★★☆☆	Skinny monobloc, capable of an open, informative sound throughout the frequency range.		●	30		●		Bk
Naim NAP 150x	795	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Strong combination with the NAC 112x preamp - hugely enjoyable.	●		50				Bk
Parasound Halo A23	600	11.02/GT	★★★☆☆	It's certainly talented, but the Halo P3/A23 power combo lacks some excitement.	●		125	●	●	●	Sl
Quad 99 Stereo	550	11.02/GT	★★★★★	Detail, speed, muscularity, authority and dynamics - 99 pre/power combo has the lot.	●		85		●		Sl
Roksan Caspian M series	750	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Brainstorming power amp - brings moribund recordings to life.	●		70	●	●		2

BUDGET £801 and over

Arcam FMJ P1	1100	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Two P1s fail to deliver excitement when combined with the C30 preamp (now discontinued).		●	180		●		2
Arcam FMJ P7	2600	05.03/GT	★★★★★	The P7 sounds huge and paired with the AV8 processor the combo is simply stunning.	●		7x150		●		2

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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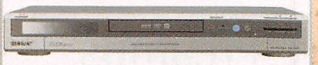

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LG 32LP1D	£CALL
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LG RZ15LA70	£CALL
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PHILIPS 15PF5120	£CALL
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PHILIPS 32PF9830	£CALL
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SAMSUNG LE23T51BX	£CALL
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SHARP LC20SH1E	£CALL
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SHARP LC26GD7E	£CALL
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SHARP LC32GA6E	£CALL
SHARP LC32GD7E	£CALL
SHARP LC32P50E	£CALL
SHARP LC37GA6E	£CALL
SHARP LC37P50E	£CALL
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SONY KDFE42A12U	£CALL
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SONY KDLS23A12U	£CALL
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Power amps continued...

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BUDGET £801 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Stereo	Mono	Power (w)	Bridgeable	Phono in	XLR in	Finishes
Arcam P1000	1600	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent but uninspiring with the Arcam AVP700 processor.			7x135			●	2
Audia Flight 50	4500	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but teamed with the Flight pre-amp it will satisfy for years to come.	●		50		●	●	2
Audio Research 150.2	2299	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fine combination with the LS16MkII power amplifier. Promises years of pleasure.	●		150				
Audionet Amp 1	3150	04.04/FT	★★★★★	Not cheap but combined with the Pre 1G2 preamp the sonic performance justifies the price.	●		200			●	2
Chord Electronics SPM 1200E	5765	05.01/FT	★★★★★	The CPA 4000 preamp and this 1200E belong at the forefront of high-end amplification.	●		350		●	●	Sl
Chord Electronics SPM 600	2330	07.99/FT	★★★★★	Used with CPA 2200 preamp (now discontined) it's hard to beat - excel in detail retrieval.	●		130		●	●	Sl
Cyrus Mono X	1200	08.03/FT	★★★★★	The original PreX with MonoX is capable of breathtaking speed and detail resolution.		●	150		●	●	2
Cyrus X Power	1000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the DACXP with preamp built in, the X Power works fabulously.	●		70	●	●	●	2
Densen Beat B-310	1200	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Very good - paired with the B-200 preamp it's right up there with the best at this price.	●		80		●		2
DNM PA3	1900	05.01/FT	★★★★★	Superlative resolution, dynamics and timing. Tested with the Reson 3C Primus preamp.	●		40			●	Bk
DNM PA3S	2900	03.99/FT	★★★★☆	Used with the DNM 3C six, merits a serious audition, but cosmetics don't impress.	●		23			●	Bk
EAR/Yoshino 861	3980	Awd01/FT	★★★★★	Gutsy but involving valve-amp; used with 864 preamp, it's something rather special.	●		32	●	●	●	Sl
GRAAF GM 20	3500	01.00/FT	★★★★★	Partner with 13. 5BII preamp for a truly magical valve combination. Brings music to life.	●		25	●	●	●	Bk
Krell FPB-400CX	11997	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the CD/preamp this FPB 400cx has sky-high ability to match its stellar price.	●		400			●	Bk
Linn Chakra C5100	2000	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Pair with the Unidisk SC for quality multichannel that's easy to operate.	●		5x56		●	●	Bk
Linn LK140	875	03.00/GT	★★★★☆	Much to like about the LK140, tested with a Wakonda(now deleted).	●		95		●		Bk
Moon W-3	3450	Awd01/FT	★★★★☆	Beautifully built, the P-3/W-3 combination puts long-term listenability before attack.	●		120	●	●	●	2
Myryad MXA2150	1500	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	This power amp is a real gem, the MXP2000 pre we combined it with lost it the star.	●		150				2
Myryad MXA7150/MXD6000	5900	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Sombre looking but the 7150 amp with the MXD6000 processor is a top-class performer.			7x150				SL
Naim NAP 200	1445	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Naim's pairing of this power amp with the NAC202 preamp is very tempting indeed.	●		70				Bk
Parasound Halo A52	1500	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	It's not cheap, but this is an excellent piece of kit with fine sound and huge appeal.	●		5x125	●	●	●	Sl
Primare A30.2	1200	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. With the Pre30 it has a powerful, generous sound.	●		120	●	●	●	Bk
Primare A30.5 MkII	1700	05.03/ST	★★★★☆	Good all-rounder with the SP31.7 processor but it lacks the last word in sheer brute force.	●		5x120		●		Bk
Quad 909	900	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Used with the 99 preamp this is a class performer. Will suit a wide range of systems.	●		140		●		Sl
Roksan Caspian M-series Mono	1100	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amp over £3000 Awards 2004. Two of these with the Caspian M-series preamp.		●	100				Sl
Rotel RB-1090	1745	07.00/GT	★★★★☆	Goes as loud as anyone could want, but it's not the most subtle (tested at £1650).	●		380		●	●	2
Rotel RB1080 (THX)	845	08.01/ST	★★★☆☆	The solid pair of RB1070/RB1080 is best suited to those who place power over subtlety.	●		200		●	●	2
Rotel RMB1075 (THX)	845	05.03/ST	★★★★★	Stunning combined with the RSP1066 processor. Impressive in stereo and with movies.	●		120x5		●		2
Usher R1.5	1450	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Paired with the P-307A preamp the R1.5 is the star - lovely organic sound.	●		103	●	●	●	1
Yamaha MX-D1	3000	03.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Packed with clever technology, but musically it's a disappointment.	●		500		●	●	Bk

Phono & headphone amps

Make your amp turntable-friendly and get the best from your headphones

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Headphone	Phono amp	Moving magnet	Moving coil	Adj cart loading	Line level inputs	Remote	Finishes
Audio Analogue Aria	495	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Nicely built and cleverly engineered, but the sound isn't good enough to worry the best.			●	●	●			Sl
Bellari VP 129	180	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Likeable, flexible phono stage - audio circuitry is valve powered and it has a headphone output.		●	●					Red
Cambridge Audio Azur 540P	40	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Musical and involving - another exemplary Azur product.		●	●			0		2
Clearaudio Basic Symmetry	540	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Certainly a decent performer, but it lacks the sonic sparkle to shine at this price point.		●		●	●			Sl
Creek OBH-21	190	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent composure and finesse for the money, though you may prefer an amp with more bass.	●					1		Sl
Creek OBH-21SE	250	05.03/FT	★★★★★	An amp that sounds absolutely gorgeous with an appropriate source and set of headphones.	●					1		Sl
EarMax Pro Headphone Amp	425	06.99	★★★★★	They don't come much cuter than this valve-powered headphone amp - lust at first listen.	●					1		Bk
Ergo Amp 1	169	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	With deep bass and good pace it creates a truly thrilling listen, but there's no room for let up.	●							Bk
Graham Slee Era Gld MkV/PSU1	460	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Limited features, but it sounds wonderful. Skills usually only found only at twice the price.		●	●			0		Sl

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Phono & headphone amps continued...

Make your amp turntable-friendly and get the best from your headphones

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Headphone	Phono amp	Moving magnet	Moving coil	Adj cart loading	Line level intputs	Remote	Finishes
Graham Slee Era Gld V/Elev EXP	970	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	This two-box combination is one of the best phono stages we've ever heard.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Graham Slee Gram Amp 1	85	04.01/GT	★★★★★	Superbly fluid and open presentation - we can't imagine anyone not liking this little star.		●	●			0		Bk
Graham Slee Gram Amp 2	125	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Great-value phono stage that will make a considerable upgrade from most in-built models.		●	●			0		Bk
Graham Slee Solo/PSU1	460	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Superb all-rounder that gets to the music's heart - deserves good headphones.	●					2		Sl
Linn Linto	995	09.97	★★★★☆	Vinyl fans will love this phono stage - it'll breathe new life into your old records.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Musical Fidelity X-CAN v3	250	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	With good headphones, offers sweet treble that works wonderfully well with classical pieces.	●					1		Sl
NAD PP2	50	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Solid, likeable performer that really makes sense in the budget systems of vinyl lovers.		●	●	●		0		Gr
Naim Headline (exc power sup)	295	07.98/FT	★★★★☆	An expensive but worthwhile headphone amplifier. The perfect partner for Naim amps.	●							Bk
Pro-ject Head Box SE	150	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	Champion when it comes to connectivity but it's a little out-boxed on purely sonic terms.	●					2		Bk
Pro-ject Phono Box MkII	55	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	For systems that cost less than £1000 this perfectly formed phono stage offers excellent sound.		●	●	●		1		Sl
Pro-ject Phono Box SE	150	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Fine development of the original, ideally suited to use with a wide variety of turntables.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Pro-ject Tube Box	300	12.03/FT	★★★★★	A valve phono stage that sounds excellent with a wide range of music.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Roksan Caspian	650	Awd01/FT	★★★★☆	Fine phonostage that performs well on all counts, but has many cheaper rivals to fight off.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Roksan Caspian M-Ser Phono SE	1000	02.04/GT	★★★★★	A massively talented performer that'll deliver a refined and detailed sound in the right system.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Sonneteer Sedley	499	06.99	★★★★★	Sparkling treble, open midband and taut bass make this phono stage a real sonic star.		●	●	●	●	0		2
Trichord Dino	299	06.01/FT	★★★★★	Best phono stage in Awards 2005. A slice of high-end performance at a very competitive price.		●	●	●		0		Bk

Trichord Dino

This has been our favourite phono stage for the last two years. Trichord saw a gap in the phono market and launched the superb Dino to fill it and nothing has come along to beat it. Overall the Dino manages to unearth all kinds of detail and then perform the tricky task of assembling it all into a coherent and enjoyable whole.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ACCESSORIES
BEST PHONO STAGE
TRICHORD DINO

Speakers

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	110	07.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Compact in name and style - the lack of dynamics makes them a little lifeless.	●		88	8	100		26x16x14	2
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 3	350	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Remain among our favourite floorstanders at the price - still worth an audition.		●	90	8	150	●	88x22x19	3
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	180	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2002 in their prime, but newer rivals have caught up.	●		89	8	100	●	36x19x24	3
Acoustic Energy Aego 2 (sub/sat)	100	04.01/FT	★★★★★	Stereo sub/sat package for PCs and consoles but fine in a hi-fi set-up.	●		-	-	A85		3 units	2
Acoustic Energy Aelite Two	450	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	These large standmounts promise an enjoyable long-term experience.	●		90	6	175	●	45x23x30	3
Acoustic Energy Linear 3	500	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Sound entertaining, but we'd prefer more quality and less quantity of sound.		●	90.5	8	150	●	91x24x27	Sl/Bk
Arcam Alto	400	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Startling dynamic ability and warm sound. Designed to match Solo system.	●		85	8	100	●	26x14x24	2
ATC SCM7	499	04.03/ST	★★★★★	Reach remarkable levels of performance - they're class in a half-pint glass.	●		84	8	300	●	30.16.21	Ch
Audiovector K1	320	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	A must-hear if size is important - they sound much bigger than they are.	●		87	4	100		26x14x22	6
Audiovector K1 Super	420	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fun, versatile and surprisingly dynamic. Ideal for small rooms.	●		87	4	120	●	26x14x22	6
AVI Neutron IV	500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Terrific if you want compact speakers, but don't want to sacrifice performance.	●		87	8	150		27x14x21	3
B&W DM303	180	09.02/ST	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Now fail to match the latest competition.	●		88	8	100		33.20.24	2
B&W DM600 S3	200	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Fantastic-looking but relaxed bass means they work best in a 5.1 system.	●		88	8	100		29x18x22	3
B&W DM601 S3	250	03.02/ST	★★★★★	Stunning speakers - evolutionary improvements on their predecessors.	●		88	8	100	●	37.20.23	3
B&W DM602 S3	300	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	In the right environment they can still excite like little else at the money.	●		90	8	120	●	49x24x29	3

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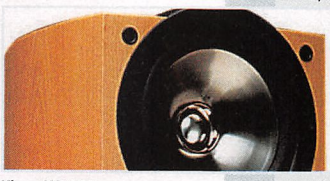
Stamping down on Prices

Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
B&W DM602.5 S3	400	05.02/ST	★★★★☆	Extremely well-built entry-level speakers but they can lack bass power.		●	88	8	100	●	85x20x29	3
Castle Richmond 3i	320	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Immensely likeable speakers that are worth a serious listen.	●		88.5	8	75		33x17x23	8
Cyrus CLS50	450	09.01	★★★★☆	Fabulous in most areas, but are let down by below-par bass performance.	●		86	8	100	●	25.18.27	3
DALI Concept 2	249	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Excel in inoffensiveness but fall short when it comes to excitement levels.	●		87	8	120		39x20x26	2
DALI Concept 6	399	07.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Have many strengths, but not talented enough to worry the class leaders.		●	91	8	150		93x20x26	2
Dynaudio Audience 42	400	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Provide a very enjoyable listen at the price, so meriting a serious audition.	●		86	4	150		28x17x25	4
Elac CL82 Titan	410	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Communicative, upfront listen and look great on a stand - partner with care.	●		89	4	120	●	33x20x27	3
Eltax Liberty 3+	149	01.01/ST	★★★★☆	Not the most even-handed, but they are still great-sounding speakers.	●		87	6	80	●	38x21x34	2
Eltax Monitor III	129	06.00/GT	★★★★★	Compact, cohesive-sounding and strong on rhythm - a great-value buy.	●		89	6	90	●	30x19x23	2
Energy Connoisseur C3	400	05.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Well made stylish speakers with good timing and rhythm but brash treble.	●		92	8	125		39x20x29	2
Epos ELS3	200	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Speedy and rhythmic but lack reach at either end of the frequency range.	●		87	4	100		27x18x20	3
Epos ELS303	400	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Not a disaster but Epos's standmounters are better sorted and better value.		●	87	4	200	●	85x18x20	3
Epos M12.2	450	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £450-£750 in Awards 2005.	●		87	8	120	●	38x20x25	3
Epos M5	349	02.05/ST	★★★★★	Trustworthy speakers with a list of talents as long as your arm.	●		87	4	100	●	33x17x21	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 706s	309	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	Offer an impressively sophisticated sound for a very reasonable price.	●		90	8	80	●	37x22x25	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 707s	399	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Imposing in many ways - audition if your tastes run to the forceful.	●		92	8	110	●	49x24x30	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 714s	479	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Deeply impressive on every level. The 714s are clear winners in their class.		●	91	8	90		90x20x27	3
Gale Gold Monitor	90	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Decent buy if you're on a budget - match them with smooth-sounding kit.	●		88	6	90	●	27x18x18	1
Gale Silver Monitor	80	07.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Good and are at their best with rock, but watch out for peaky treble.	●		88	6	90	●	27x18x17	2
Heybrook HB1 2000	180	09.02/ST	★★★★☆	Classy and can be sublime with classical music. Not for Rock and Dance fans.	●		90	6	75	●	38x21x24	2
Heybrook HB2	230	11.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fine dynamics and scale, but not quite as balanced as the competition.	●		90	6	100	●	43x24x29	2
Heybrook HB3	350	05.02/ST	★★★★☆	Will appeal to those who place refinement and definition above all.		●	90	6	100	●	90x24x29	2
Heybrook HB4	500	03.01/ST	★★★★☆	Capable speakers that excel with voices but are too polite, so lack sparkle.		●	90	6	150	●	100x24x29	2
Heybrook Point Five	130	01.01/ST	★★★★★	Superb value for money, they are a genuinely musical pair of speakers.	●		89	6	70	●	30x17x20	2
Jamo E805	199	09.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Small in stature and sound, but the price tag is comparatively large.	●		90	8	100	●	31x19x24	3
JPW 201	119	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Fine-looking tiny speakers with a more than acceptable sound at the price.	●		90	6	60		26x15x24	2
JPW 202	159	03.02/ST	★★★★☆	Solid performers but don't have the talent to worry the class leaders.	●		91	6	80	●	38x21x30	2
JPW Millennium ML 510i	150	06.00/ST	★★★★☆	Pleasant, listenable speakers with fine rhythmic ability, but they lack detail.	●		89	6	70	●	33x22x20	2
KEF Cresta 10	130	09.03/ST	★★★☆☆	They're cheap, but KEF can do much better than these disappointments.	●		90	8	100	●	31x19x24	3
KEF Cresta 30	200	12.03/FT	★★★☆☆	A better bet than the Cresta 10s, but the series is a disappointment.		●	90	8	100	●	83x19x24	3
KEF iQ3	280	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive-quality and they do a good all-round job for the money.	●		89	8	120	●	37x22x33	4
KEF iQ5	400	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Stereo speaker Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Stunning floorstanders.		●	88	8	130	●	82x18x26	4



KEF iQ5

The best pair of KEFs we've heard in years – they produce stunning scale and authority for something this size. Put them at the end of a quality stereo set-up and they sing like little else at this price and will do equally well if fronted by a budget home-cinema system. They're not fussy about positioning, either.

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PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO SPEAKERS
KEF iQ5

Klegg KG-103	299	05.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Attractive to look at but the sound quality is unimpressive at this price level.	●		87	8	60		30x19x25	4
Linn Classik Unik	250	01.03/GT	★★★★★	With the Classik Music System they're easy to listen to and have fine insight.	●		88	8	n/a		36x32x34	2
Magnat Vector Needle 11	149	01.01/ST	★★★☆☆	Well-built, cute and certainly have sonic merits, but there's better out there.	●		89	6	50		22x13x15	3
Magnat Vintage 120	349	12.01/ST	★★☆☆☆	Look brilliant, but disappoint with a ham-fisted sonic performance.		●	91	4	150	●	97x20x32	2
Magnat Vintage 420	499	05.02/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well built but poorly balanced speakers - there are more attractive options.		●	92	4	280	●	100x25x31	4
Mission 780SE	350	07.03/GT	★★★★☆	Victims of rapidly improving competition - still good, no longer outstanding.	●		87	8	150	●	28x17x27	Ald

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Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
BUDGET Up to £500												
Mission m31i	140	12.04/GT	★★★★★	We fully endorse the 'i' for 'improved', these are great little speakers.	●		88	8	75	●	26x17x28	3
Mission m32	170	12.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable speaker, but in the face of classy competition it comes up short.	●		90	8	100	●	32x20x33	3
Mission M33i	230	07.05/FT	★★★★★	If you want floorstanders we would happily recommend these mighty Missions.		●	90	8	100	●	85x20x33	3
Mission m34i	330	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Grand, imposing sound - if you must have a floorstander listen to these.		●	93	8	150	●	25x20x33	3
Mission v60	250	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	We like these a lot, but some of the magic of older designs isn't there.	●		86	8	100	●	30x18x24	3
Mission v62	500	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Promising start for Mission's Volare range - good value and do little wrong.		●	88	8	100	●	89x21x33	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B2	200	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Well built, refined, sweet and very musical.	●		90	6	100	●	35x19x25	2
Monitor Audio Bronze B4	350	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting and muscular listen, but not the most faithful reproduction on offer.		●	91	6	150	●	85x19x26	2
Monitor Audio Silver RS1	350	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Thoroughly likeable and enjoyable - they're laidback about room position too.	●		90	6	80	●	31xx19x24	5
Monitor Audio Silver S5	450	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Fine speakers, but don't do enough to challenge for class honours.		●	90	6	100	●	80x18x20	4
Mordaunt-Short Avant 902	150	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Authority and scale in abundance, but they're decidedly average in other ways.	●		89	8	100	●	29x17x27	2
Mordaunt-Short Avant 906	350	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Thrive in large open spaces but not the last word in sonic excellence.		●	90	6	150	●	85x17x30	2
Mordaunt-Short MS912	200	09.02	★★★☆☆	Disappointing design which is average with h-fi but better with movies.	●		89	6	150	●	36x21x30	2
Mordaunt-Short MS914	250	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking value for money - refreshingly uncomplicated, full of enthusiasm.		●	89	6	150	●	90x21x27	2
NHT SB2	300	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Among the most enthusiastic speakers around, only drawback is the treble.	●		92	8	150	●	30x19x22	Bk
Opera Mini	495	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	Italian and beautiful - deliver a lively and entertaining sound.	●		86	8	50		28.16.21	2
Quad 11L	379	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	No longer top of the class, but a classic nonetheless - offer a lot in sonic terms.	●		86	6	150	●	33x19x25	4
Quad 12L	500	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	Talented standmount speakers with superlative standard of finish.	●		88	6	125	●	36x21x25	4
Revel Concerta M12	400	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Well worth a try if low-end excitement is your thing.	●		87	8	150		32x23x30	3
Revolver R33	499	04.03/ST	★★★★☆	Highly competent standmounters, not ideal if you value excitement above all.	●		89	8	100	●	39x21x28	Mp
Revolver RW16	399	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Immensely likeable - take a longer listen than normal to get hooked.	●		90	6	100	●	34x18x23	2
Ruark Acoustics Epilogue II	345	08.02	★★★★☆	Mightily appealing with classy build and fine midrange - warrant an audition.	●		87	8	100	●	27x19x23	Va
Tannoy Fusion 1	100	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Classy and largely capable - if cash is tight then these are a solid buy.	●		87	8	70		30x17x22	2
Tannoy Sensys DC1	449	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Highly competent speakers, but would benefit from a more passion.	●		88	8	110	●	41x21x29	3
Triangle Comete Es	495	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Exciting and involving but not what you'd call a relaxing listen.	●		91	8	80	●	17x14x13	3
Triangle Titus Es	370	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable speakers but in the face of stiff competition they fail to inspire.	●		90	8	60	●	37x30x18	3
Wharfedale Diamond 8.1	120	09.03/ST	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Neat solution for small listening rooms.	●		86	6	100	●	30x20x18	2
Wharfedale Diamond 8.2	150	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive but they are no longer a match in this highly competitive field.	●		86	6	100	●	36x21x26	2
Wharfedale Diamond 8.3	200	12.01	★★★★★	Terrific performers for the money. Few can match their all-round abilities.		●	86	6	100	●	80x21x26	2
Wharfedale Diamond 9.0	100	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Great sound from tiny cabinets - look no further for value compact speakers.	●		86	6	75		23x15x17	5
Wharfedale Diamond 9.1	180	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers under £250 in Awards 2005.	●		86	6	100	●	30x19x28	4
Wharfedale Diamond 9.4	300	02.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Can't hold a candle to their little brother - they're a plodding, unexciting listen.		●	86	6	120	●	85x22x30	2
Wharfedale LoudPanel	150	11.99/GT	★★★★★	Exciting speakers that look like picture frames. Great if lack of visibility is vital.			87	8	70		24x46x21	2
Wharfedale Pacific Evo 10	320	07.03/GT	★★★★☆	Loads of bass for the money but they lack the sparkle of the best at this price.	●		87	6	150	●	38x23x34	3
Wharfedale Pacific Evo 20	450	06.03/GT	★★★★☆	With more control and detail they'd win full marks. Position away from walls.		●	87	6	150	●	85x23x34	3
BUDGET £501 to £1500												
Acoustic Energy Aelite Three	750	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Big, bold and balanced speakers for sensible money.		●	89	8	175	●	92x23x30	3
Arcaydis AK3	599	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Highly enjoyable; look plain and boxy but sound sweet and full-bodied.		●	89	8	100	●	79x20x24	Va
Arcaydis AK3.2	950	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	Spritely pair of floorstanders that should certainly be worth an audition.		●	89	8	100	●	90x20x24	3
ART Skibo	800	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Fast and fun enough to make these speakers worth a serious listen.	●		90	8	n/a		44x19x25	2
ATC SCM12	1000	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2003. Extremely honest, work best with muscular amps.	●		84	8	300	●	39.22.26	Ch
Audio Note AZ-Three	799	10.01	★★★★☆	Stunning when fed the right kind of music. Rockers may find they lack punch.		●	94	6	100	●	100x28x32	Va
Audiovector Mi1 Signature	1320	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Sufficient talent to tangle with the class-leaders, but a bit pricey.	●		88	8	160	●	35x20x28	5
AVI Pro-Nine-Plus	800	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Offer thrilling dynamics and speed - give them a long listen.	●		90	8	250		34x23x24	2

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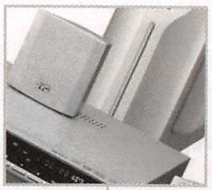

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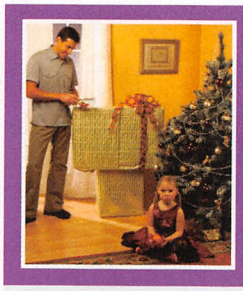

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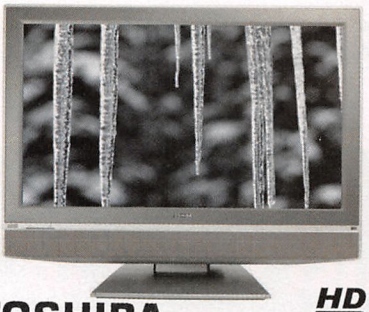

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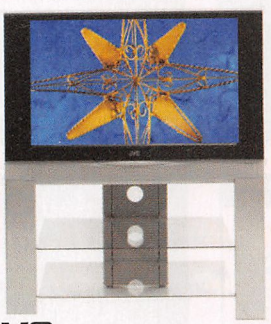

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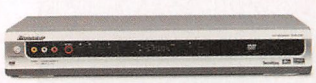

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DVR RECORDER WITH HARD DRIVE / DMR-EH50

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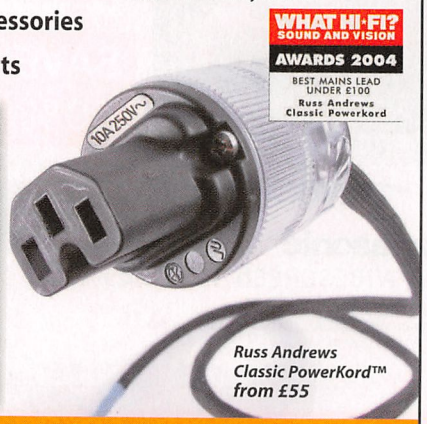
What Hi-Fi, May 2004.



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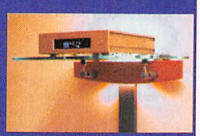

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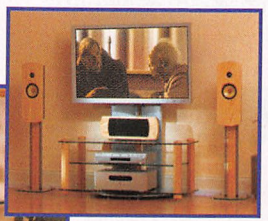

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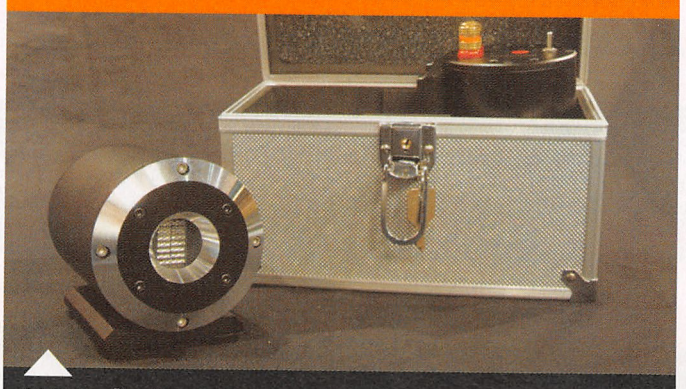

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PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
B&W 704	1400	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Offers detail and clarity that is unrivalled at this price, but could time better.		●	90	8	150	●	96x22x32	5
B&W 705	900	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Low end is a little short of authority but otherwise they're stunners.	●		89	8	120	●	42.22.32	5
Canton Vento 802	700	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	For sheer excitement, they're the best around for this money.	●		87	8	150		36x22x31	3
Castle Conway 3	950	10.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Promise much, don't have the sonic ability to challenge the best at this price.		●	88	8	175	●	91x22x27	9
Castle Howard S3	1450	08.01/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent craftsmanship and solid performance. Well worth an audition.		●	88	8	175	●	99x21x32	9
Castle Pembroke	550	08.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fine-looking and well-built, but they lack that last ounce of sparkle.		●	88	8	75	●	73x19x21	9
DALI Ikon 2	550	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Musical, unshowy performers that get right to the fundamentals of recordings.	●		91.5	6	130	●	44x19x30	2
DALI Ikon 6	899	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £750-£1000 in Awards 2004.		●	91.5	6	150	●	100x19x33	2
Diapason Emera	875	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Capable of impressive performance, but they lack dynamics and drive.	●		89	8	130		37x20x29	3
Dynaudio Audience 52	650	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Classy and will grace any mid-price set up.	●		86	4	150		33.20.26	4
Dynaudio Audience 52SE	950	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Excellent speakers that really do sound like a special edition upgrade.	●		86	4	150		35x20x26	4
Elac FS207.2	1000	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent performers for the money, but not the greatest.		●	89	4	250	●	94x17x27	2
Energy Connoisseur C-7	800	04.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Do the job, but for this kind of money you can buy some amazing speakers.		●	93	8	200		97x17x39	2
Epos M15.2	699	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Accomplished all-rounders, offering solid performance at a reasonable price.		●	88	8	120	●	87x20x25	3
Epos M22	949	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Best floorstanders in this supertest - they'll give you a rousing sonic ride.		●	87	6	200	●	88x20x25	3
Everything But The Box Terra II AM	999	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Unique styling which won't suit everyone, but they are extremely capable.	●		86	8	100		38x18x28	14
JBL Ti2K	1400	03.00/FT	★★★★★	Terrific design that looks great - astonishing sound for under £2000.	●		88	8	200	●	42x28x42	2
KEF iQ7	600	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Deliver a strong performance, with impressive authority and scale.		●	90	8	150	●	87x22x33	4
KEF iQ9	800	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performers - if you want refined and muscular speakers give these a go.		●	91	8	200	●	95x22x33	4
KEF XQ Five	1500	05.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Aren't the sonic stars we expected - the Reference range does better.		●	90	8	150	●	101x23x30	5
KEF XQ One	750	06.03/ST	★★★★☆	Not the best, but if their style appeals we'd urge you to take a listen.	●		89	8	120	●	42x23x31	5
Linn Katan	650	09.01	★★★★☆	Involving and entertaining performers - work well with a wide range of music.	●		85	8	n/a	●	34x17x23	4
Linn Ninka	1100	10.01	★★★☆☆	Unusual shape and beautiful finish, but their performance is only average.		●	90	4	n/a	●	98x25x28	3
Mission 782SE	900	06.03/ST	★★★★★	'Special edition' - possibly the most talented a grand or so will buy.		●	89	8	200	●	80x17x30	Ald
Monitor Audio Gold Ref. 10	800	08.01/FT	★★★★★	Few speakers 36cm tall are capable of a sound with so much conviction.	●		88	8	100	●	36x20x27	4
Monitor Audio Gold Ref. 20	1499	03.01/FT	★★★★★	Immensely accomplished - fast and dynamic sound with bags of resolution.		●	89	6	150	●	93x20x30	4
Monitor Audio Silver RS6	600	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Looks dressed to kill, delivers plenty of detail and punches like a heavyweight.		●	91	6	120	●	85x19x25	5
Monitor Audio Silver S6	600	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive with good timing and attack, but the bass can be heavy-handed.		●	91	6	120	●	85x19x25	4
Monitor Audio Silver S8	800	03.03/FT	★★★★☆	Smart, well built and offer a wide dynamic range; bass can overwhelm.		●	91	6	175	●	90x19x27	4
Monopulse Model 32A	895	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Great for the money - fast, dynamic sound and tracks rhythms superbly.		●	89	8	120	●	96x22x25	10
PMC GB1	1145	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Clever design creates a big sound that is good fun to listen to.		●	87	8	150	●	87x16x23	3
ProAc Studio 140	1400	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1000-£1500 in Awards 2005.		●	91	8	250	●	104x19x28	4
ProAc Tablette Reference 8	699	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Great speakers that can entertain like few others at this price.	●		86	8	100	●	27x15x23	4
Quad 22L	895	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Very capable speakers - their big, bold sound suits larger rooms.		●	89	6	200	●	87x21x28	4
Revolver R45	899	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Big, smooth, relaxing sound but don't use them in small rooms.		●	90	8	200	●	93x25x32	3
Ruark Acoustics Etude	650	04.03/ST	★★★★☆	Much to like - good timing, refined midrange and an exciting listen.	●		87	8	120	●	34x21x27	4
Ruark Acoustics Prelude II	900	10.02/ST	★★★★☆	Tempting propositions, the performance promises years of enjoyment.		●	88	8	120	●	88x21x22	Va
Ruark Acoustics Sabre III	899	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Thrilling delivery really makes you want to listen to music.	●		86	8	120		34x20x27	2
Spendor S3/5se	850	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Wonderfully natural-sounding, expecially useful for smaller rooms.	●		84	8	125	●	30x17x19	2
Spendor S3e	795	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Superb performers that put more expensive, less talented rivals to shame.	●		86	8	125	●	34x17x26	4
Spendor S5e	1095	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1000-£2000 in Awards 2004.		●	87	8	200	●	79x17x26	4
Spendor S6e	1495	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Thoroughly enjoyable, great choice for long listening sessions.		●	88	8	250	●	88x19x30	4
Spendor SR5 (wallmount)	1000	06.03/FT	★★★★★	Wallmounts - sacrifice nothing in sonic performance to traditional speakers.	●		88	8	125	●	31x31x18	4
Tannoy Eyris 1	600	04.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Eye-catching design, but their cold character will leave you unmoved.	●		88	8	75	●	36x17x26	2

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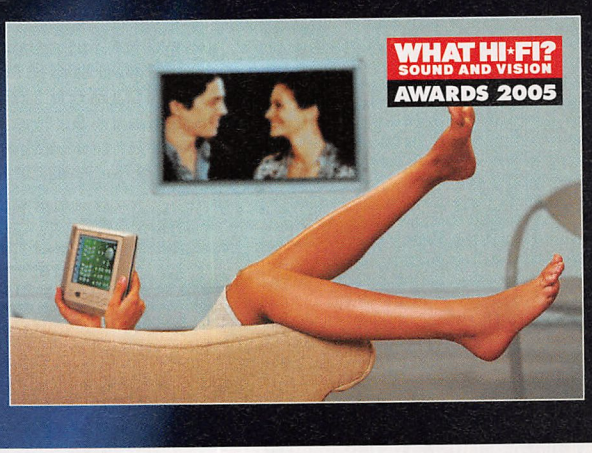

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
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GLOSSARY
page 226

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PLASMA SCREENS

MAKE	MODEL
Hitachi	32PD5200
Hitachi	42PD5200
Hitachi	42PD5300
JVC	AV42B50
LG	RZ42PX11
Panasonic	TH37PE30B
Panasonic	TH37PW7B
Panasonic	TH42PE30B
Panasonic	TH42PW7B
Panasonic	TH50PV30B
Philips	37PF9946
Philips	42PF9966
Philips	42PF9986
Pioneer	PDP435XDE
Pioneer	PDP435FDE-TE
Pioneer	PDP505XDE
Pioneer	PDP503MXEV
Samsung	PS42V4SX
Samsung	PS50P3HXX
Sharp	LC37GD1E
Sony	KDEP42M1SI
Sony	KEP37M1S
Sony	KDEP37XS1
Sony	KDEP42SX1
Sony	KDEP42MRX1
Vision	PM4230
Toshiba	42WP46B

LCD TELEVISIONS

MAKE	MODEL
DMTech	DML4117WD
DMTech	DML4120SD
Hitachi	17LD4220
Hitachi	28LD5200
JVC	LT17C50
JVC	LT17D50
JVC	LT23C50
JVC	LT26D50S
JVC	LT32D50S
LG	RZ15LA70
LG	RZ20LA70
LG	RZ17LZ40
LG	RZ26LZ50
Loewe	MIMO15C
Panasonic	TX20LA2
Panasonic	TX22LX2
Panasonic	TX26LXD1
Panasonic	TX32LXD1
Philips	15PF8946
Philips	17PF9946
Philips	23PF8946
Philips	23PF9946
Philips	30PF9946
Philips	32PF9976
Philips	23HM8821
Philips	32PF9986
Philips	37PF9986
Philips	42PF9986C
Samsung	LE15E31SX
Samsung	LW20M11CX
Samsung	LW17N23NX
Sanyo	27LC3
Sanyo	30LD3
Sharp	LC15SH1E
Sharp	LC15L1E
Sharp	LC26GA3E
Sharp	LC20SH1E
Sharp	LC32GD1E
Sharp	LC37GD1E
Sony	KLV17HR3B
Sony	KLV17HR3S
Sony	KLV20SR3S
Sony	KLVL23M1SI
Sony	KLVL23M1B
Sony	KLV21SG2
Sony	KLV26HG2
Sony	KLVL32M1SI
Sony	KLVL32M1B
Sony	KDLL32MRX1
Sony	KDLL42MRX1
Toshiba	14VL44B
Toshiba	17WL46B
Toshiba	17WLT46
Toshiba	23WL46
Toshiba	27WL46B
Toshiba	30WL46B
Toshiba	32WL48P

A/V SYSTEMS

MAKE	MODEL
Aiwa	AVJX33
Denon	DHT500SD
Denon	DHT550SD
JVC	THS3
JVC	THS5
JVC	THSW8
JVC	THA75R
JVC	QP112AL
JVC	QPF30AL
JVC	QPF70AL
JVC	QPF90AL
LG	LHT6740
Panasonic	SCHT520
Panasonic	SCHT05
Panasonic	SCHT870
Panasonic	SCHT25R
Panasonic	SCHT1500
Panasonic	SCST1S
Panasonic	SCHT37R
Philips	LX3900SA
Pioneer	DCS222
Pioneer	DCS323
Pioneer	DCS222MR
Pioneer	HC51S
Pioneer	DCS424
Pioneer	NSDV1000
Sanyo	DCTS780
Sony	DAVD150
Sony	HTP1200
Sony	DAVSB200
Sony	HTDDW860
Sony	DAVSB300
Sony	DAVSR1
Sony	DAVSB500W
Sony	DAVSR3
Sony	DAVSR2
Sony	HTR6100
Sony	DAVSR4W
Sony	DAVLF1
Thomson	DPL915VD
Toshiba	SD44HK
Yamaha	DVXS100
Yamaha	DVXS120

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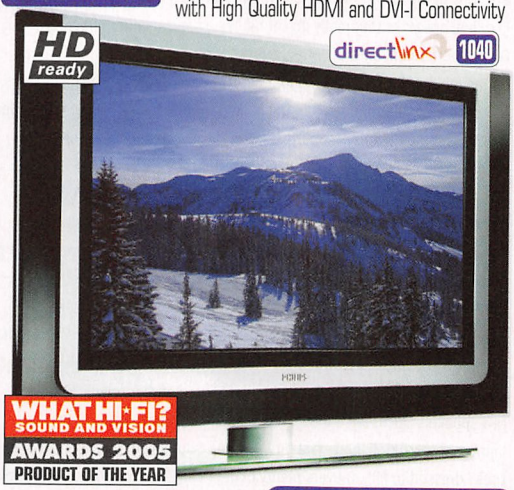

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with 2.1 Channel Speaker System

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Comes Complete with Media Board

directlinx 1042

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 BEST 40"+ FLATSCREEN TELEVISION

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MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £10

Panasonic 26" Widescreen LCD Television

with SD Memory Card Slot

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 BEST 26 - 30" FLATSCREEN TELEVISION

• 1366 x 768 Pixel Resolution • Viera 3D Colour Management System • Nicam Stereo Sound • NTSC Playback • 800:1 Contrast Ratio • Integrated Speakers, Stand & Tuner **Model No. TX26LXD500**

directlinx 1041

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Panasonic DIGA DVD Recorder
with PAL Progressive Scan Function

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with HDMI Connection

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- CD-R(RW), DVD-R(RW), MP3 and JPEG CD Playback
- NTSC Output **Model No. DVD1920S**

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MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

SONY 80Gb DVD Recorder
with Nicam Decoding Function

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 BEST DVD/HDD RECORDER £250 - £450

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- DVD-R(RW), DVD+R(RW), HDD Recording
- Built-in Analogue Tuner
- 6 Hours Recording per DVD-RW Disc
- Precision Cinema Progressive Scan
- CD-R(RW) Playback Facility **Model No. RDRHX510S**

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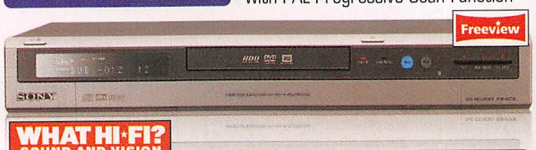
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

SONY 160Gb DVD Recorder
with PAL Progressive Scan Function



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with 7 Channel Surround Sound

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- Dolby Pro-Logic IIx, Dolby Digital and DTS Decoder
- Dolby Digital EX and Complete DTS-ES
- Pre-Outs for 7.1 Channels
- On-Screen Display
- RDS Tuner **Model No. AVR1906S**

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MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

YAMAHA Home Cinema Amplifier
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Tannoy Eyris 2	1000	02.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine buy, combining refined sound, solid build and excellent finish.		●	89	8	125	●	91x17x26	2
Tannoy Sensys DC2	649	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Serious floorstander option - take care with aggressive or bright-sounding kit.		●	89	8	175	●	97x21x29	3
Tannoy ST50 (Super Tweeter)	600	12.02/FT	★★★★★	Super-high-frequency speakers, designed to sit on your existing pair.			93	8	200		15x10	Bk
Vienna Acoustics Schonberg	1500	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Good looking, but sonically more suited to home cinema than hi-fi.		●	91	4	200		105x27x9	Al
Wharfedale Pacific Evo 30	650	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Fantastic value - space-hungry but you'll be stunned by the dynamics.		●	89	6	200	●	88x23x40	3
BUDGET £1501 and over												
Acoustic Energy AE1 MkIII	1990	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers over £2000 in Awards 2004. Incredible performance.	●		87	8	200		31x19x25	3
ART Expression (plus stands)	4000	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Terrific speakers that can unravel a recording with ease. Deserve shortlisting.	●		88	8	100		42x20x30	Va
ART Skibo/Skibo bass module	1600	08.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Transforms the Skibo into a floorstander, but it's not worth the extra £800.		●	90	8	n/a	●	108x22x28	2
ATC Active 20	3251	11.03/FT	★★★★★	Top class active speakers - a stunning blend of insight, dynamics and timing.	●		84	8	300	●	30.16.21	Ch
ATC SCM150ASL	11858	06.05/FT	★★★★★	If you judge on how they sound these are up there with the all-time greats.	●		-	-	A350		34.8x19.6x25.5	6
ATC SCM35	1999	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Scintillating - following a design blip the SCM35s are back with a vengeance.		●	85	8	300	●	88x23x30	2
B&O Beolab 8000	2298	01.03/GT	★★★★☆	Tall, slender and organ-piped shaped - fine with BeoSound 9000 system.		●		-	A80		132x15x15	Al
B&O BeoLab3	1800	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Impressive visually and some excellent qualities, but they cost far too much.	●		-	-	A125/125		43x25x38	Bk
B&O BeoLab5	10000	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Work equally well as sculpture as they do speakers - gratify on every level.		●	-	-	A2500		97x49dia	Bk
B&W 703	2000	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Teetering on the brink of greatness but can't quite muster overall coherence.		●	90	8	200	●	101x23x36	5
B&W 805S	1600	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1500-£2000 in Awards 2005.	●		88	8	120	●	42x24x35	3
DALI Helicon 300	1835	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	If you listen to acoustic, classical or vocal-based music you'll love these Dalis.	●		86	4	200	●	44x21x36	2
DALI Helicon 400	3000	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Extremely likeable speakers that combine refinement with bite.	●		88	4	300	●	102x22x46	2
Dynaudio Audience 72SE	1750	01.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Quality speakers, but they lack the of refinement of others in this price range.		●	87	4	230		96x20x26	4
Dynaudio Audience 82	1700	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Will please the bass-heads, but for pure hi-fi perfomance look elsewhere.		●	87	4	300		106x22x36	4
Eclipse TD 512	1750	05.02/FT	★★★★★	Partnered with the A502 amp they make a great package.	●		81	6	30		29x37x36	Bk
Eclipse TD 712z	4000	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Remarkable, will bring uncompromised musicality into your living room.	●		83.5	6	70		98x35x38	Sl
Energy Veritas 2.3i	2400	02.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Solid build, but they aren't as dynamic as the class leaders at this price.		●	90	8	200		103x22x36	2
Ferguson Hill FH 001	9950	07.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Stunning looking acrylic horn speakers - shame about the performance.		●	100	8	30		165x92x75	Ac
Focal-JMlab Micro Utopia Beryl	3799	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Stunning - challenging hard for the 'World's Best' standmount title.	●		89	8	100		43x25x38	3
Harbeth Super HL5	2079	05.03/FT	★★★★★	Lookers they're not - but when they sing, few rivals can match them.	●		85	8	150	●	64x32x30	2
JBL Ti6K	2600	09.02/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish speakers with some strong qualities but they lack cohesion.	●		90	6	300	●	110x38x53	2
KEF Reference Model 203	3000	09.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent - superb all-round sonic performance and fine build and finish.		●	89	8	200	●	107x25x41	3
Meridian DSP5200	6150	04.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Stunning DSP speakers in some ways, but we expected more.		●	-	-	A75x3		90x30x36	6
Mordaunt-Short Performance 6	3500	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Sensational flagship floorstanders that sound scarily realistic and look lavish.		●	89	6	150	●	121x24x37	2
NHT Evolution T5	2820	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Unusual approach - a great alternative to traditional stereo designs.		●	-	-	A4x250		108x19x44	Bk
PMC FB1+	1695	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fun-loving, expressive delivery with exceptional feeling of power and weight.		●	90	8	150	●	100x20x30	3
PMC IB1	5195	04.01	★★★★★	Revealing and enjoyable in equal doses and will please the bass fiends.	●		89	4	500	●	74x33x47	Va
PMC OB1	2700	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2003. Spectacular, controlled and highly musical.		●	87	6	300	●	103x20x33	3
ProAc Response D15	1790	11.02/FT	★★★★★	Musically involving presentation and superlative build - take a long listen.		●	88	8	180	●	98x19x25	6
Quad ESL-988	3500	12.00/FT	★★★★★	World class - the single driver presents a fabulously together sound.			86	8	n/a		94x67x32	3
Revel M22	1700	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well-made, dynamic and enthusiastic - inject drive into your music.	●		85	6.4	n/a	●	37x22x30	3
Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor	2149	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Delightful, with a graceful sound that'll pamper your ears hour after hour.	●		88	4	250		35x19x32	2
Spendor S8e	1895	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Hugely enjoyable listening experience, but lower frequencies fail to convince.		●	89	8	300	●	92x23x32	4
Spendor SP2/3E (Classic)	1750	07.00	★★★★★	Will delight with their combination of naturalness, insight and scale.	●		88	8	80	●	54x27x32	2
Wilson Benesch Arc	2500	02.02/FT	★★★★★	The very best of Wilson Benesch speaker magic in a pint-pot design.	●		88	6	200	●	31x23x37	8
Wilson Benesch Curve	5000	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Impressive - closer than any rival we've heard to being all things to all people.		●	88	6	200	●	91x23x37	8
Wilson Benesch Discovery	5700	04.01	★★★★★	Innovative design for the music lover - appeal to the ears and eyes.		●	87	6	200	●	108x23x27	8

OASIS

RECHARGEABLE WEATHERPROOF DAB RADIO

- Over 15 hours battery life from built-in battery system
- Weatherproof and splash resistant
- Stereo input for connecting your iPod, MiniDisc or CD player
- Headphone socket
- USB connector for future updates

PURE

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 226

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Not all products are available from all outlets: please call, or check online at www.superfi.co.uk

AV AMPLIFIER
YAMAHA DSPAX757SE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

- "Frighteningly good for the money"
- 7.1 decoding, 7 x 100 watts
- *£399.95 (Was £499.95 Save £100)*

OUR PRICE **£399.95**
WAS: £499.95
SAVE: £100.00

SPEAKERS
MISSION VOLARE V63

- Real-wood veneer
- Black finish
- High-class cabinet construction
- Quality drivers and electronics
- *£299.95 (Was £599.95, Save £300)*

OUR PRICE **£299.95**
WAS: £599.95
SAVE: £300.00

HOME CINEMA SYSTEM
DENON ADV550

- Multi-region DVD player
- Also plays WMA, JPEG and MP3
- 6.1 AV receiver
- Brilliant build and sound from a stylish AV solution
- *£349.95 (Was £529.95, Save £180)*

OUR PRICE **£349.95**
WAS: £529.95
SAVE: £180.00

SPEAKERS
EPOS M12.2

- "Best for all-round performance"
- Bookshelf design
- Choice of real-wood finishes
- *£409.95 (Was £449.95, Save £40)*

OUR PRICE **£409.95**
WAS: £449.95
SAVE: £40.00

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

DAB TUNER
DENON TU1800DAB

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

- DAB/FM/AM coverage
- RDS and DAB text services
- Black or silver. All metal case and aluminium fascia
- *£199.95 (Was £249.95, Save £50)*

OUR PRICE **£199.95**
WAS: £249.95
SAVE: £50.00

DVD PLAYER
PIONEER DV585

- Multi-region DVD playback
- Multi-format: DVD-Audio, SACD, DivX, MP3, WMA, JPEG, VCD
- Black or silver
- *£99.95 (Was £149.95, Save £50)*

OUR PRICE **£99.95**
WAS: £149.95
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SUBWOOFER
MISSION MS10

- Built-in 150 watt amplifier
- 10" bass driver
- Speaker level and line level inputs
- *£149.95 (Was £249.95, Save £100)*

OUR PRICE **£149.95**
WAS: £249.95
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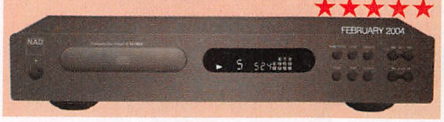
CD PLAYER
NAD C521BEE

- "It leaves last year's model – and every competitor at this price level – eating dust"
- Grey or silver finishes
- *£169.95 (Was £199.95, Save £30)*

OUR PRICE **£169.95**
WAS: £199.95
SAVE: £30.00

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
★★★★★
FEBRUARY 2004



DAB TUNER
PURE DRX701ES

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Awards 2002

- "If you want a quality home tuner for digital radio, you need look no further."
- *£149.95 (Was £249.95, Save £100)*

OUR PRICE **£149.95**
WAS: £249.95
SAVE: £100.00

HI-FI RACKS
TARGET CL430

- Real rosewood veneer
- Four shelves
- *£129.95 (Was £199.95, Save £70)*

OUR PRICE **£129.95**
WAS: £199.95
SAVE: £70.00

TARGET S230

- Real cherry wood veneer
- Four shelves
- *£129.95 (Was £229.95, Save £100)*

OUR PRICE **£129.95**
WAS: £229.95
SAVE: £100.00

HEADPHONES
SENNHEISER HD650

- "Phenomenal detail resolution: fine dynamics and great bass"
- *£199.95 (Was £299.95, Save £100)*

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
★★★★★
FEBRUARY 2004

DVD PLAYER
YAMAHA DVSL100

- Slim, sleek, silver, metal-cased and faced
- Multi-region, multi-format DVD playback
- Also plays JPEG, MP3 and VCD
- *£99.95 (Was £169.95, Save £70)*

OUR PRICE **£99.95**
WAS: £169.95
SAVE: £70.00

AV SPEAKERS

ELAC CINEMA 1 ESP II

- Stylish silver 5.1 speaker system
- Includes wall brackets
- **£199.95 (Was £399.95, Save £200)**

OUR PRICE **£199.95**

WAS: £399.95
SAVE: £200.00

AV SPEAKERS

TANNOY ARENA 5.1

- Choice of four finishes
- 100 watt handling satellites
- Subwoofer with built-in 300 watt amplifier
- **£999.95 (Was £1199.95, Save £200)**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ AUGUST 2005

OUR PRICE **£999.95**

WAS: £1199.95
SAVE: £200.00

Superfi

AV RECEIVER

DENON AVR1906

- 7.1 AV receiver
- Easy setup with supplied microphone
- Black or silver finish
- **£299.95 (Was £329.95, Save £30)**

OUR PRICE **£299.95**

WAS: £329.95
SAVE: £30.00

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

TURNTABLE

GOLDRING GR1.2

- www.superfi.co.uk exclusive
- Includes Goldring Elektra cartridge
- High-quality tonearm
- **£99.95 (Was £139.95, Save £40)**

OUR PRICE **£99.95**

WAS: £139.95
SAVE: £40.00

AMPLIFIER

MARANTZ PM7200

- "Two amps in one – in Class AB mode it is powerful and exciting, in Class A it's stunning"
- Black finish
- **£199.95 (Was £329.95, Save £130)**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Best Buy 2003

OUR PRICE **£199.95**

WAS: £329.95
SAVE: £130.00

SPEAKERS

TANNOY SENSYS RANGE

Sensys DC1 bookshelf
Our Price £299.95
Was £449.95 Save £150

Sensys DC2 floorstanding
Our Price £449.95
Was £649.95 Save £200

Sensys DC Centre speaker
Our Price £199.95
Was £299.95 Save £100

Sensys DC5.1 (DC1 + DC2 + DC Centre + TS10 subwoofer)
Our Price £1099.95
Was £1799.95 Save £700

Sensys 1 bookshelf
Our Price £149.95
Was £199.95 Save £50

Sensys 2 floorstanding
Our Price £299.95
Was £399.95 Save £100

Sensys Centre speaker
Our Price £149.95
Was £199.95 Save £50

Sensys 5.1 (Sensys 1 + 2 + Centre + TS10 subwoofer)
Our Price £799.95
Was £1199.95 Save £400

Also available
Tannoy TS10 Subwoofer
Our Price £299.95
Was £399.95 Save £100

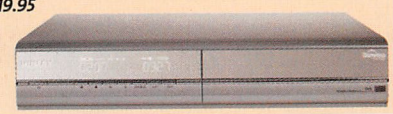
FREEVIEW PVR

HUMAX PVR9200T

- 160GB hard disk with twin tuner
- Simultaneous record/view
- USB port, MPEG file transfer, MP3 playback
- **£219.95**

OUR PRICE **£219.95**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ DECEMBER 2005



FREEVIEW PVR

TOPFIELD TF5800PVR

- 160GB hard disk for fuss-free timer recordings
- Record and watch a combination of up to four channels simultaneously
- Twin tuners with twin modulated outputs
- Too many features to list – see www.superfi.co.uk/toppy

OUR PRICE **£259.95**

WAS: £289.95
SAVE: £30.00

Black or silver finishes

DVD/HD RECORDER

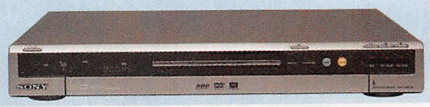
SONY RDRHXD710

- Multi-region DVD playback
- Freeview tuner
- 160GB hard disk
- **£429.95 (Was £499.95, Save £70)**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

OUR PRICE **£429.95**

WAS: £499.95
SAVE: £70.00



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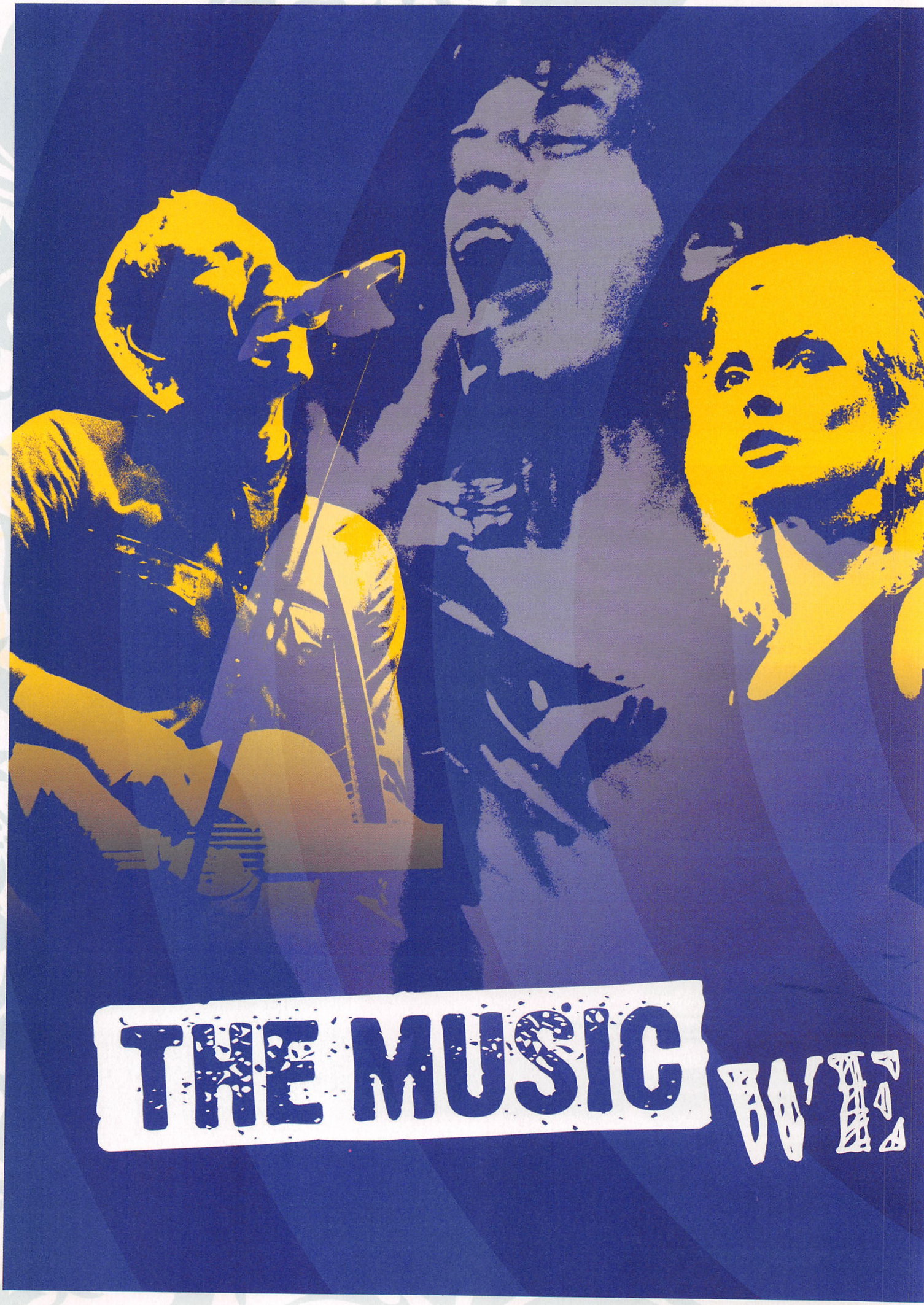
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SONY RDRHXD710 - £379

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SONY RDRHX910 - £529
PIONEER DVR930 - £829
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PHILIPS DVDR3305 - £119
PHILIPS DVDR7300H - £NEW
YAMAHA YSP800 - £599
YAMAHA YSP1000 - £799

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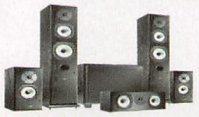
M-SHORT THX - £979
ACOUSTIC ENERGY EVO3B - £649



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PHILIPS 32PF9830 - £1699
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PIONEER PDP436XDE - £2399
SONY KV28CS70 - £399

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YAMAHA CDRHD1500	449

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SONY TCWE475	119
YAMAHA KXW321 Twin	139
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MARANTZ PM4400	99
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MARANTZ PM7200KI	369
NAD C320BEE	179
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NAD C272 POWER	349
ROKSAN KANDY MK3	SPECIAL
ROKSAN CASPIAN M	SPECIAL
SONY TAFE370	99
SONY TAFB940R	249

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SONY STSDB900	189
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PURE DRX702ES	229

MINIDISC RECORDERS

SONY MDSJE480	99
SONY MDSJE780	149
SONY MDSJB980	199

CD PLAYERS

MARANTZ CD5001	149
MARANTZ CD7300	249
NAD C521BEE	169
NAD C542	279
PIONEER PDM603	149
ROKSAN KANDY MK3	SPECIAL
ROKSAN CASPIAN M	SPECIAL
SONY CDPXE270	49
SONY CDPXE370	79
SONY SCDCE595	169

AV RECEIVERS

DENON AVR1706	219
DENON AVR1906	279
DENON AVR2106	399
DENON AVR2805	529
DENON AVR3806	NEW
MARANTZ SR4600	249
MARANTZ SR8500	849
PIONEER VSX1015	369
PIONEER VSX2014i	499
PIONEER VSAAX10Ai	2199
SONY STRDB790	175
SONY STRDE698	199
SONY STRDB895D DAB	299
SONY STRDB900	349
SONY STRDB2000 Black	285
YAMAHA RXV657	349
YAMAHA RXV4600	999
YAMAHA DSPAX757SE	379
YAMAHA RXV1000D	399
YAMAHA RXV2500RDS	649

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD1720	119
DENON DVD1920 HDMI	229
DENON DVD2910	499
DENON DVD3910	799
PHILIPS DVP5100	59
PHILIPS DVP3100V	99
PIONEER DV380	59
PIONEER DV585	99
PIONEER DV989Ai	799
SONY DVPNS30	59
SONY DVPNS52	69
SONY DVPNS92	179
SONY DVPNS9100	899
SONY SLVD930 VCR/DVD	129
SONY SLVD980 VCR/DVD	139
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HITACHI 42PD7500	£CALL
PANASONIC TH37PV500	£CALL
PANASONIC TH42PV500	£CALL
PHILIPS 42PF5520D	£CALL
PHILIPS 42PF9967D	£CALL
PIONEER PDP436XDE	£CALL
PIONEER PDP506XDE	£CALL
SONY KDEV42A12	£CALL
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PANASONIC TX26LXD52	NEW
PANASONIC TX26LXD500	V SPECIAL
PANASONIC TX32LXD52	NEW
PANASONIC TX32LXD500	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 20PF5320	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 26PF4310	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 26PF5520D	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 32PF5520D	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 32PF7520D	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 32PF9967D	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 32PF9830	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 37PF5520D	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 37PF9986	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 37PF9830	V.SPECIAL
PHILIPS 42PF9830	V.SPECIAL
SONY KLVS19A10	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS23A12	V.SPECIAL
SONY KLV23HR3	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS26A12U	V.SPECIAL
SONY KLVL32M1	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLS32A12	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLV32A12	V.SPECIAL
SONY KDLV40A12	V.SPECIAL
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SHARP LC32GA5	V.SPECIAL
SHARP LC32P50	V.SPECIAL
SHARP LC32GD1	V.SPECIAL
SHARP LC32GD7	V.SPECIAL
SHARP LC37P50	V.SPECIAL
SHARP LC45GD1	V.SPECIAL
TOSHIBA 32WLT58	V.SPECIAL

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SONY RDRHX710	£CALL
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PIONEER DCS333	219
PIONEER RCS77H	599
SONY DAVDZ500	329
SONY DAVZ700	SPECIAL
SONY DAVX1	649

SPEAKER PACKAGES

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MORDAUNT-SHORT PREMIERE	249
MORDAUNT-SHORT PREMIERE PLUS	399
MORDAUNT-SHORT GENIE	from 599
MORDAUNT-SHORT THX	979
YAMAHA NSP110	89

SPEAKERS

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MISSION V63 VOLARE	299
MISSION 780SE	SPECIAL
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Micro & style systems

Music in the kitchen and bedroom can sound good and look good, too

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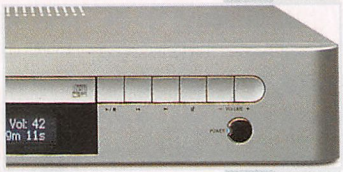
PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SOURCE: CD	MP3	DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	RDS	RECORDS: MiniDisc	CD-R/-RW	MP3	Hard disk	Inputs	Speakers
Bush CDP2025/AMP2025	180	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Separate CD player and amp - good value and it sounds great for the cash.	●												4	
Bush LSD36DAB	80	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Looks the part and doesn't sound too bad - fine for a kid's bedroom.	●		●	●	●								0	●
Creative SoundWorks CD740	200	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Clock radio with speakers and CD player - tested at £300 now better value.	●	●		●	●								2	●
Denon D-F101	450	02.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Blurs the distinction between micro and hi-fi.	●			●	●			●					5	●
Denon D-M33	300	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great successor to the D-M31 but it's not exceptional. Try different speakers.	●			●	●			●					2	●
Denon D-M35DAB	380	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Another cracking micro from Denon - this on adds DAB. But skip the speakers.	●		●	●	●			●					2	●
Genus PR1i(portable)	135	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Comes with DAB, FM and CD playback, put poor sound means it's not a contender.	●		●	●									.	●
Goodmans 1104DAB	89	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi microsystem under £200 in Awards 2005 - ideal for bedroom/kitchen.	●		●										0	●
Hitachi AX-M68D	200	12.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	A case of style over substance - the sound just doesn't match the looks.	●		●	●				●					2	●
Ministry of Sound MOSMCO18	100	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well equipped and stylish white cube system. It even includes a DAB tuner.	●		●	●	●								1	●
Ministry of Sound MOSRC 023	80	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stand-out boombox - we love the alternative design and the bass power.	●	●	●	●	●								1	●
Morphy Richards 29100	100	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Proves as good as it looks and unusually employs NXT flat-panel speakers.	●			●										●
Onkyo CD-505DAB	220	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi microsystem £200-£500 in Award 2005. Dinky with a vigorous sound.	●	●	●	●	●			●					3	
Panasonic SCEN9	180	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Impressively compact, but sadly the sound is equally as thin and lightweight.	●		●	●	●									●
Panasonic SCPM71SD	200	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	One for the feature fan - if you use SD card kit it makes lots of sense.	●	●		●	●			●	●		●			●
Pure Digital Legato	300	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Does a lot of things well, but in sonic terms it can't compete with the leaders.	●	●	●	●				●					1	●
Russ Andrews RAVE (amp/spks)	199	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Mini sound system - nice idea, but you can get better performance at this price.													4	●
TEAC MCDX10	180	Awd04/FT	★★★☆☆	Fantastically svelte looks with lashings of style - the sound is less exciting.	●			●	●								1	●
TEAC Reference 250 DAB	300	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Great-value option for DAB radio fans. Bigger speakers mean bigger bass.	●		●	●	●			●					3	●
TEAC Reference 300MkII	480	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Three classy looking boxes with a rich and realistically pleasing sound.	●		●	●	●			●					6	
Thomson CS700	200	11.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Novel and forward-thinking but the sound is ill-focused, thin and abrasive.	●	●		●	●						●			●

BUDGET £501 and over

Arcam Solo	1000	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Excellent sound from a one-box product.	●	●	●	●	●			●					5	



Arcam Solo

If you want fuss-free hi-fi, this is it. We have always associated high-end hi-fi with separates, and not with single-box products, however, with its excellent all-round sound, Arcam's Solo a CD/amp/DAB tuner combo – bridges the gap superbly. This is the first true alternative to hi-fi separates at this price.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS
ARCAM SOLO

B&O Beosnd 3000/Blab 4000	2525	09.00/FT	★★★★☆	Looks guaranteed to turn heads and a performance that's pretty impressive.	●			●	●	●		●					2	●
B&O Beosound 3200	1725	07.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Style, quality engineering and a 40GB CD memory, but it is not great hi-fi.	●			●	●			●				●	1	
B&O Beosound 9000	2550	01.03/GT	★★★★☆	Guaranteed to turn heads and a performance that is impressive to boot.	●			●	●			●					1	
Denon 201SA	800	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Stylish, listenable mini system that sounds almost as good as it looks.	●			●	●			●					7	●
Linn Classik Music	995	04.01/ST	★★★★★	With Classik Unik speakers, a flexible system with true separates performance.	●			●	●								3	
Nakamichi Soundspace 5	799	04.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Huge style appeal but if you want to use it as your main system add a subwoofer.	●			●									2	●
Nakamichi Soundspace 8	999	07.99/FT	★★★★☆	Product of the Year in the Awards 1999. Stylish good looks and musical.	●			●	●								3	●
Nakamichi Soundspace 9	2999	06.02/GT	★★☆☆☆	'Wow' designer looks, but the sound quality is a distinct letdown at the price.	●			●	●								3	●
Philips WACS700(wireless)	600	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Brings wi-fi hi-fi to the masses - simple to use and remarkably effective, too.	●	●		●							●	●	1	●
Red Rose Spirit IA1 LS1	1999	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Minimalist amp and small speakers - good sound for the house-proud muso.													4	●
Sugden Master System	2647	05.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. It has it all: looks, build and sonic talent.	●												2	
T+A K1	1700	01.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Eye-catching, but fails to deliver the sort of sound we'd expect for this price.	●			●				●					2	

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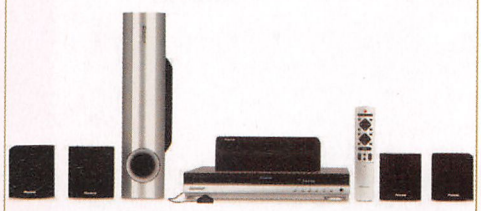

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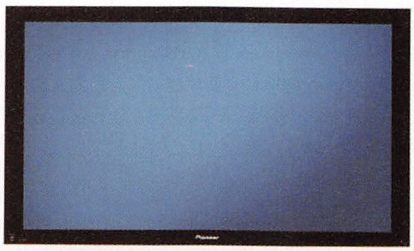
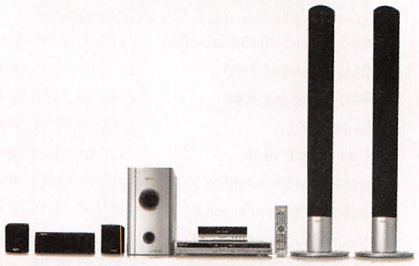


TRP. £4459.99 SAVE 34% **£2950.00**

- THE PDP-506FDE IS A FANTASTIC 50" PLASMA TELEVISION THAT INCLUDES AN ANALOGUE MULTI-MEDIA BOX. ALSO FEATURES A HIGH DEFINITION 127CM VISIBLE VIEWING ANGLE SCREEN, 4000:1 CONTRAST RATIO, 1.100 CD/M2 SCREEN BRIGHTNESS, 1280X768 PANEL RESOLUTION, NTSC, PAL, SECAM COMPATIBILITY, SVGA/XGA/SXGA COMPATIBILITY, SRS SURROUND SOUND AND HDMI INPUT

Pioneer RCS-77H



TRP. £719.99 SAVE 26% **£532.49**

- THE RCS-77H IS A STYLISH 5.1 HOME CINEMA SYSTEM WITH A DVD RECORDER AND A 160GB HARD DISC DRIVE. ALSO FEATURES 455 HOURS RECORDING CAPABILITY, MULTI-FORMAT DVD RECORD, MULTI-FORMAT DVD/CD PLAYBLACK, 620 W AMPLIFIER, 4 X 110W SATELLITE SPEAKERS, 1 X 110W CENTRE SPEAKER, 1 X 70W SUBWOOFER, 14 SOUND MODES AND IS DOLBY PRO LOGIC/PRO LOGIC II/DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS DIGITAL COMPATIBLE.

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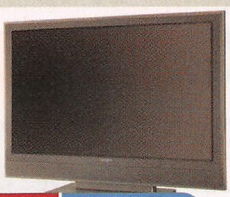

- HITACHI'S 42" (106CMV) PLASMA TELEVISION COMBINES STUNNING DESIGN WITH CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY AND HDMI. THIS 42" (106CMV) WIDESCREEN PLASMA TELEVISION COMES WITH HDMI SOCKET, 1000CD/M2 LUMINANCE PANEL, 3000:1 CONTRAST AND 16.7 MILLION COLOUR REPRODUCTION.

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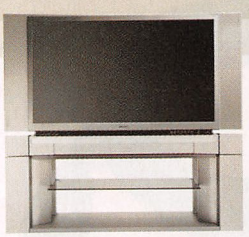

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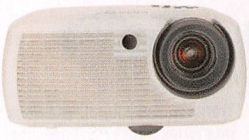

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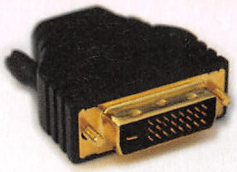

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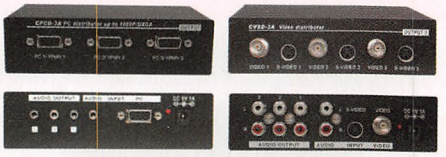

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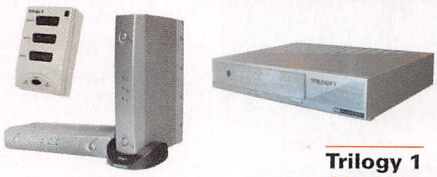

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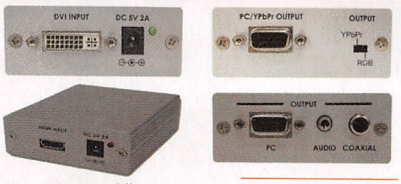

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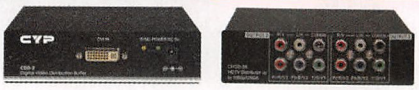

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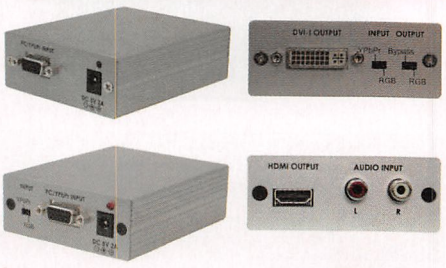

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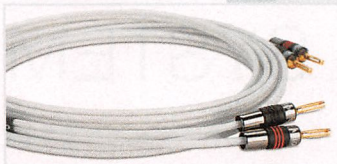
PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
BUDGET Up to £7/m															
Atlas 2+1.1	5.50	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Not the most exciting-sounding cable, but it is sensible value for money.	●			8.5	●				40	●	
Atlas Basic Biwire	3.75	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking entry-level cable that offers a neutral balance.	●			2x7	●						●
Audioquest Type 4	6	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Smooth and refined presentation - ideal to help soften aggressive systems.	●			8.0	●					●	
Black Rhodium AST 200	6	05.98/GT	★★★★★	Remarkably expressive listen: full of energy, it gives powerful bass.	●			8.0	●						
Black Rhodium T200	5.25	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Eminently suitable for rear speakers but don't use in a stereo system.	●		●	6.0	●						
Black Rhodium T90	5	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Thin spaghetti-like cable that delivers a fast, agile and cohesive sound.		●		2.8	●	●					
Chord Company Carnival	3	02.99	★★★★★	Upfront, detailed sound - full bass, vibrant treble and excellent detail.	●			7.5	●				40	●	
Chord Co Carnival Silver Plus	5.50	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Cable Product of the Year - Chord Carnival Silver - in Awards 2004.	●			12x6	●	●			40	●	
DNM Reson MkII	6.95	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000 - a blend of smoothness, power and excitement.		●	●		●					●	
Ecosse CS-2.2 Plus	2.80	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Designed as a first-step upgrade, certainly better than the standard stuff.	●			7.4	●				40		
Ecosse Mini Flat 4	3.25	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Flexible and unobtrusive - but sound is compressed and bass lacks clarity.	●		●	-	●				Unterm		●
Ecosse Reference Bi-wire CS-4.2	5.75	01.99/FT	★★★★☆	A rocker's cable, though some may find it too hot to handle.	●			9.5	●				60		●
Ecosse Reference CS-2.3	3.85	01.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Ensures bass is taut and imaging is top-notch.	●			8.2	●				40		
Ixos XHS-606W	2.50	10.00/GT	★★★★☆	Twisted braid construction - performs well, but lacks midrange detail.	●			2x1.7	●						
Ixos XHS-706W	3.50	02.99	★★★★★	Highly Recommended in the Awards 1997. Superb wide-open-sounding wire.	●			2x2.6	●						
Ixos XHS-806W	5	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Improvement over freebie cable but others do it better.	●			2x2.6	●						
Kimber 4PR	5	05.98/GT	★★★★☆	Sounds impressively controlled and muscular - well worth an audition.	●			10	●				50	●	
Merlin C4	2.50	09.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine entry-level cable, most suitable for slightly warm-sounding set-ups.	●		●	11x.9	●				50		
Merlin C6	4.50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great-sounding cable but the build and finish is disappointing.	●		●	16	●				50	●	
Nordost Cinemaflex 14/2	5	09.02/GT	★★★★☆	Try this clear-sounding cable - you can do better in terms of sheer power.	●			6.0	●	●				●	
QED Micro Bi-wire	3.50	Awd00/FT	★★★★☆	Competitively priced, ideal for discreet installations. Delivers fine detail.	●			13.3x2.6	●				68		●
QED Original Mk II Bi-Wire	5.50	10.00/GT	★★★★★	Truly excellent levels of detail and spaciousness make this cable a winner.	●			17.0x3.6	●				68	●	●
QED Silver Anniversary XT	5.50	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Speaker cable Product of the year in Awards 2005. Sounds excellent.	●			7.0x3.3	●	●			45		



QED Silver Anniversary XT

QED didn't win this Award last year, though its Silver Anniversary had won an Award for the previous six years, so somewhat miffed, the company developed an 'XT' version of its Silver Anniversary cable and it sounds excellent. Discreetly designed, its open and detailed presentation leaps into the foreground superbly.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CABLES
QED SILVER ANNIVERSARY XT

QED Silver Micro	3.50	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Decent performer and an attractive option for those on a tight budget.	●			5.0x2.5	●				inc		
Supra Classic 4.0T	4	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Solid performer at a sensible price. Detail is good rather than great.	●			4.0	●			●		●	
Supra Rondo 4x2.5	5	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Excellent design for biwiring applications.	●			4x2.5	●			●		●	●
True Col Ind Sidewinder (Biwire)	6	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Conspicuous and colourful biwire cable. Avoid if you have aggressive kit.	●		●	2x2.5	●				5.99	●	●
van den Hul The Bridge	6	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Wonderfully smooth presentation, if you enjoy realistic vocals, you'll love it.	●			12.5	●	●			60		
BUDGET £8/m and over															
Atlas Apex	25	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Ideal for those who don't want to further aggravate an aggressive set-up.	●			7.5	●				40		
Atlas Ascent	25	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Highly tuneful and refined, every last musical note being uncovered.	●			8.0	●				40		
Atlas Hyper 3.0	20	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Multi-talented cable that's certain to keep you coming back for more.	●			8.0	●				58		
Audio Note AN-Ba (stereo metre)	33	10.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Smooth presentation with plenty of weight and scale but you can buy better.	●			8.0	●				33		
Audioquest Slate (3 metres pair)	250	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Lays bare foibles in characterful components; dazzles top-quality kit.	●			12	●				n/a	●	
Black Rhodium AST200 BiWire	10	02.97/FT	★★★★★	Pick of cables that we've heard at this price - excellent detail.	●			10.6	●						●
Chord Co Carnival Silver Biwire	9.50	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cable Product of the Year - Chord Carnival Silver - in Awards 2004.	●			25x6	●	●			50		●
Chord Company Odyssey 2	17.95	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	For a vibrant and entertaining sound this is a good place for your money.	●			8.0	●	●			40	●	
Chord Co Rumour 4 Bi-Wire	21.95	07.01/GT	★★★★★	Not only does it look good, but it's an impressively dynamic performer, too.	●			9.0	●	●			50	●	

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★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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GLOSSARY
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What How & Where..

TO BUY YOUR HI-FI SYSTEM

"...too many people today know the price of everything and the value of nothing."

Oscar Wilde

Isn't it easy to buy a new system? You read the magazine product reviews, you find out who sells the recommendations, five-star favourites or best buys at the cheapest price, you order the system, get a friend who knows his onions to install it - and live happily ever after.

This is a fairly well-trodden path but it leads to dissatisfaction, endless upgrades and a lot of wasted money. It's likely that the system will help you lose interest in music pretty rapidly. The problem is that there are more myths about hi-fi than Aesop's Fables. CD gives you perfect sound. All CD players sound the same. A £50 CD player plays high fidelity music. All magazine reviewers are experts. Big speakers are always better than small ones. More watts per channel is everything. MP3 format gives you high quality. A collection of 'Best Buy' components will be a great system. And so on and so on. All myths.

Get the best system for your money by asking our Top Twenty UK specialist hi-fi dealers.

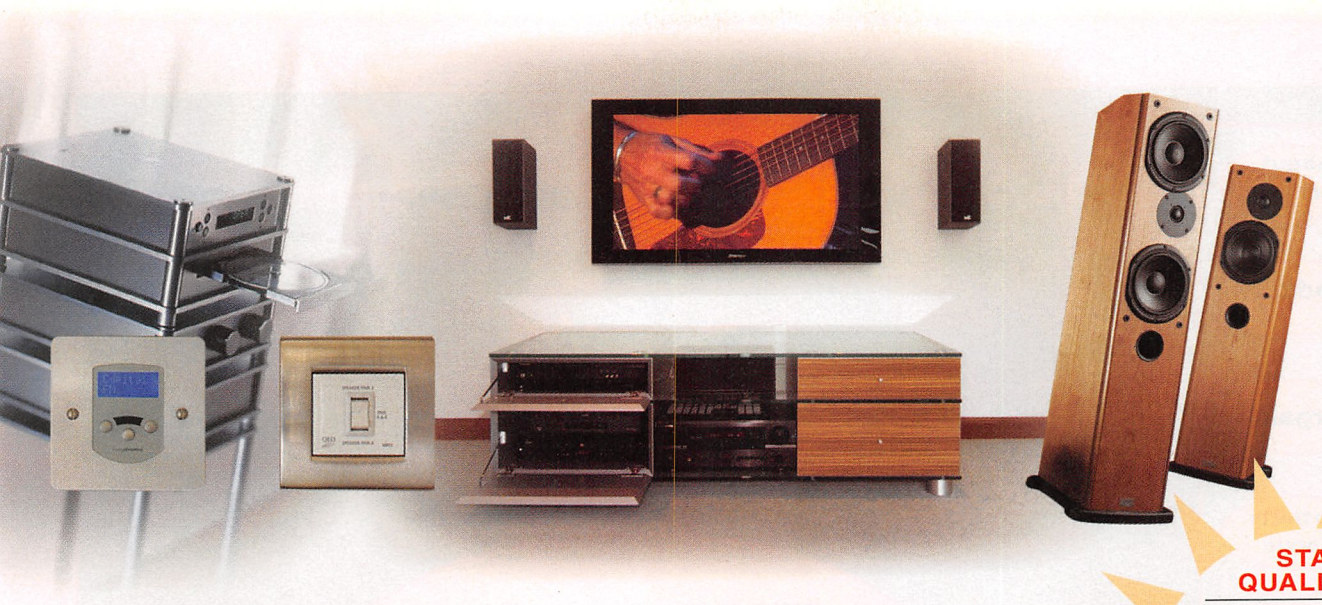
Music - the real aim

Our aim must be to buy a hi-fi system that will prove musically satisfying, reliable and deliver true value for money. If the system doesn't excite you musically you've wasted your money. What is even worse is that you may not even realise you've bought a bad egg – you'll just switch the TV on instead and your desire to listen to music will gradually diminish. Have you ever been in a pub or club where you realise it's very difficult to conduct a conversation, even to the extent of being really tiring? A poor quality system continuously distorts but I don't mean it necessarily reaches the point of audibly breaking up. With a top quality system you can play music very loudly and still hold a conversation because it's free of distortion. A poor system is tiring to listen to even when it's played at low volume.

If you want proof, go into a shoe or clothes shop where they play background 'music' and try to enjoy listening. It's odds on you'll fail.

What and Where to buy

The system you think you want may not be right for you. So where do you start? Here's an important tip... **don't** start with WHAT – start with **WHERE**. There is only one way to give yourself the best chance of getting it right first time, and that's through a specialist hi-fi dealer. Now it's likely you have preconceived ideas that may put you off visiting one. Although you would welcome the advice and guidance, you don't know the technical jargon. You don't want to be talked down to. Your friend has said they only sell expensive gear and they're not interested if you don't have a big budget. They're expensive. Again, just myths. Most specialist hi-fi dealers are running their business because, above all, they love music. They spend a large portion of



their time listening to music and comparing systems to get the best possible results. They know the component combinations which don't gel together and, conversely, they know the combinations which give the best performance within a given price range. But they all also know the system must suit you.

Buying or being sold to?

Now there's a group of long-established specialist dealers who are totally committed to putting the customer first. Their idea of 'selling' is to discuss your requirements, offer their advice, give you the best options, then play the systems for you and allow you to be the judge.

Listening to your choice of music in a peaceful, well organised demonstration room, you may be surprised and, almost certainly, relieved to discover how easy it is to hear the differences between components and between systems. You'll be able to make a clear and informed decision about what to buy. It comes down to trusting your own judgement rather than the opinion of a reviewer you've never met ...and who won't refund your money if you're not satisfied or be at the end of a phone to sort out any problem you might encounter.

The story doesn't end there. These shops won't abandon you once you've put your hand in your pocket. They won't leave you to set up the system you've selected as best you can. They'll install it in your home, make sure it sounds great, and make sure you're entirely happy with the way it works. Why? Because a high proportion of these dealers' custom comes through people who have bought from them before, either directly or by commendation. It's vital to them to get it right for you.

Getting the best deal

Oscar Wilde wrote "...too many people today know the price of everything and the value of nothing." Specialist retailers know that not all potential purchasers will seek them out. They tend to attract the more discerning, thoughtful customers. Let's face it, a good deal is about a great deal more than just price. After all, unless you've got money to burn, you'll be living with your new system for years. Most of these dealers offer much longer equipment guarantees than provided by the manufacturer, a very worthwhile benefit, but it also makes it in the dealer's interest to ensure high build quality and reliability. Maybe you could save a few pounds by buying piecemeal but you'll lose out on the overall package. As far as the dealers are concerned, maybe they believe that taking care of their customers properly is a nicer way of doing business than just handing over boxes.

STAR QUALITIES

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

SERVICE ★★★★★

FACILITIES ★★★★★

VERDICT ★★★★★

QUALITY ASSURED ★★★★★

Listed below are 20 of the best hi-fi shops in the country. They have been selected because they are known to do an excellent job in guiding customers towards hi-fi that will give them years of musical enjoyment and total satisfaction.

OUR TOP 20 UK SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

LONDON

N1 GRAHAMS HI-FI
190a New North Road.
020 7226 5500

SW11 ORANGES & LEMONS
61/63 Webbs Road, Battersea.
020 7924 2043

SOUTH

Ashford, Kent
SOUNDCRAFT HI-FI
40 High St. 01233 624441

Brighton THE POWERPLANT
40 Church Road, Hove
01273 775542

Chelmsford RAYLEIGH HI-FI
216 Moulsham Street.
01245 265245

Colchester RAYLEIGH HI-FI
33 Sir Isaac's Walk.
01206 577682

Horsham AUDIO DESIGNS
7-9 Park Place.
01403 252255

Kingston-upon-Thames
INFIDELITY
9 High Street Hampton Wick.
020 8943 3530

Rayleigh, Essex
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
44a High St. 01268 779762

Ringwood, Hampshire
PHONOGRAPHY
Star Lane. 01425 461230

Southend-on-Sea
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
132/4 London Road.
01702 435255

Southampton PHASE 3 HI-FI
37 Bedford Place.
023 8022 8434

Worthing PHASE 3 HI-FI
213-217 Tarring Road.
01903 245577

MIDLANDS

Banbury OVERTURE
3 Church Lane.
01295 272158

Birmingham SOUND ACADEMY
152a High Street, Bloxwich.
01922 493499

Birmingham
MUSIC MATTERS
363 Hagley Road, Edgbaston.
0121 429 2811

Coventry FRANK HARVEY
163 Spon Street.
024 7652 5200

Leicester CYMBIOSIS
6 Hotel St. 0116 262 3754

Nottingham CASTLE SOUND & VISION
48/50 Maid Marian Way.
0115 9584404

NORTH

Cheadle THE AUDIO WORKS
14 Stockport Road.
0161 428 7887

Sheffield MOORGATE ACOUSTICS
184 Fitzwilliam St.
0114 275 6048

York SOUND ORGANISATION
2 Gillygate. 01904 627108

Gateshead LINTONE AUDIO
7-11 Park Lane, Gateshead.
0191 477 4167

SCOTLAND

Glasgow LOUD & CLEAR
520 St Vincent St, Finnieston.
0141 221 0221

Edinburgh LOUD & CLEAR
26 Hamilton Place,
Stockbridge.
0131 226 6500

N. IRELAND

Belfast LYRIC HI-FI
429-431 Lisburn Road.
028 90 381296

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AWARDS

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Atlas Voyager • April 2002
SPEAKER CABLE
Atlas Ascent • October 2003
Atlas Hyper 3.0 • July 2005
DIGITAL INTERCONNECT
Atlas Compass • August 2002

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Atlas Vector • August 2002
COMPONENT VIDEO CABLE
Atlas Element • May 2004

ATLAS RETAILERS

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• Ashford (Kent) 01233 624441	Soundcraft Hi-Fi www.soundcrafthifi.co.m
• Guildford 01483 504801	P. J. Hi-Fi Ltd www.pjhifi.co.uk
• Harrow 020 8863 0938	Harrow Audio www.harrowaudio.com
• London N7 020 7607 2148	Bartletts Hi-Fi www.bartlettshifi.co.uk
• London W1 020 7580 3527	Hi-Fi Experience www.hifilondon.co.uk
• Sevenoaks 01732 456573	Sound Seduction www.soundseduction.co.uk
• Worthing 01903 245577	Phase 3 Hi-Fi www.phase3hifi.com

South West England

• Bath 01225 446245	Radfords Hi-Fi www.radfords.co.uk
• Bournemouth 01202 555512	Suttons Hi-Fi www.suttonshifi.co.uk
• Bournemouth 01202 529988	Movement Audio www.movement-audio.co.uk
• Bristol 0117 944 1010	Radfords Hi-Fi www.radfords.co.uk
• Poole 01202 730865	Movement Audio www.movement-audio.co.uk
• Salisbury 01722 322169	Salisbury Hi-Fi www.salisburyhifi.co.uk
• Southampton 02380 228434	Phase 3 Hi-Fi www.phase3hifi.com
• Weymouth 01305 785729	Weymouth Hi-Fi www.weymouthhifi.co.uk

Central England

• Banbury 01295 272158	Overture www.overture.co.uk
• Birmingham 0121 429 2811	Music Matters www.musicmatters.co.uk
• Solihull 0121 742 0254	Music Matters www.musicmatters.co.uk
• Stourbridge 01384 444184	Music Matters www.musicmatters.co.uk
• Sutton Coldfield 0121 354 2311	Music Matters www.musicmatters.co.uk
• Wilstead 01234 741152	British Audio Products www.britishaudio.co.uk

North England

• Hull 01482 223096	A. Fanthorpe Ltd. www.fanthorpes.co.uk
• Gateshead 0191 477 4167	Lintone Audio www.lintone.co.uk
• Gateshead (Metro) 0191 460 0999	Lintone Audio www.lintone.co.uk
• Sheffield 0114 275 6048	Moorgate Acoustics www.morgateacoustics.co.uk

Scotland

• Aberdeen 01224 585713	Holburn Hi-Fi www.holburnhifi.co.uk
• Glasgow 0141 332 4707	Glasgow Audio www.glasgowaudio.com

Speaker cables continued...

One of the most cost-effective system upgrades – ever

BUDGET £8/m and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
Chord Company Signature	115	11.04/GT	★★★★★	One of the most effective upgrades you will ever hear if you own expensive kit.	●			25	●				inc		
Cyrus Speaker Cable	25	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Capable of performing extremely well in more than just Cyrus systems.		●	●	flat	●				inc	●	●
Ecosse CS4.4 Biwire	9	11.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Reasonable, but a long way from being outstanding value for money.	●			10	●				60		●
Ecosse CS4.45	9.75	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Hugely capable cable that allows for an enjoyable listening experience.	●			3.0/1.5	●				60	●	●
Ecosse ES2.3/CS2.15 biwire	17	07.01/GT	★★★★★	A combination of two different cables that sound stunning in partnership.	●	●		9.5/1.15	●				60		●
Ecosse Reference ES-2.3	13	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Dynamics are vivid and help this cable grab the attention like few others.	●			9.5	●				40		
Ecosse Reference ES2.2	8.99	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent cable but it lacks the polished ability of the best at this price.	●			9.5	●				40		
Ecosse Reference MS-2.3	25	10.99/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000. A room-filling sound that few cables manage.	●			8.2	●				40		
Inakustik Atmos Air 309 Silver	50	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Comprising two 3m lengths terminated - suits taut and energetic kit perfectly.	●		●	15x5	●	●			Inc		
Kimber 8PR(4.5m terminated)	153	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Slightly oddball 'bundle of wire' looks - sound is direct and impressive.	●			12	●				n/a	●	
Kimber KS-3035 (8ft termin)	3274	04.99	★★★★★	Crystalline clarity, superb bass extension and control - does it all and more.	●			26	●	●			n/a	●	
Merlin C12	7.50	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent detail and a dynamic ability that's a match for anything at this price.	●		●	10	●				50	●	
Nordost 4 - Flat	12	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent detail and dynamics - presentation has a pleasing character.		●	●		●					●	●
Nordost Blue Heaven Rev II	67.50	10.99/GT	★★★★☆	Fantastic cable but the price becomes jaw-dropping when terminated.	●		●		●	●				●	●
Nordost Cinemaflex 14/4	10	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Neutral, impeccable precision and dynamics.	●			8	●	●				●	●
Nordost Solar Wind	32.50	01.99	★★★★★	Fine separation and airy, open sound. A fantastic cable, but expensive.	●		●		●	●				●	
Nordost Superflat MkII Bi-Wire	23	07.01/GT	★★★★☆	Fine cable in many ways - perfect for systems with overbearing bass.	●		●	0.6	●					●	●
QED Genesis	30	08.99	★★★★★	Costly, but the Genesis performs so well it's certainly worth the money.	●			16.6	●	●			45		
QED Genesis SI Spiral Biwire	60	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Everything simply sounds more real - in the right system it's breathtaking.	●			19.6	●	●			68		●
QED Silver Anniversary Biwire	10	07.01	★★★★★	Delivers open, fast and transparent sound - at the price, it's terrific.	●			17x3.3	●	●			68		●
QED X-Tube XT300	10	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Fast, exciting yet well-balanced cable - makes the most of your system.	●			11.7x5.6	●				45		
QED X-Tube XT350	15	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Detail resolution is absolutely terrific.	●			12.1x5.9	●	●			45		
QED X-Tube XT400	20	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker cable over £10 per metre in Awards 2004.	●			6	●	●			45		
Tara Labs Prism Nexa	9.95	08.99	★★★★★	Great with all types of music- don't use with bright-sounding electronics.	●			7.8dia	●				60	●	
True Colours Ind Anaconda	12	10.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Cool design but detail and dynamic contrast isn't up to the class leaders.	●		●	2x2.4	●	●			11.99	●	●
True Colours Ind Diamondback	140	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Ideal against skirting boards but it doesn't offer the detail you'd expect.(2x5m)	●		●	15x2.1	●	●			Inc	●	
True Colours Industries Python	12	10.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Speedy and dynamic, but ultimately disappoints with a muddled bass.	●			9.5	●	●			9.99	●	
van den Hul Goldwater	8.50	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Good level of detail but it is not the most neutral cable.	●			17x5	●	●					

Analogue interconnects

Use a dedicated lead and sonic delivery takes a jump

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	Directional
Abbey Road Monitor Starquad	101	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Well-made and accomplished interconnect that's worth a listen.	●			0.8m		●				●		
Atlas Equator	40	08.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Fabulous insight whatever music you listen to.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Explorer	90	07.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent debut from a new brand - of particular note is the bass performance.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Questor	60	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Makes your kit sound better - avoids imprinting unwanted character.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Voyager	110	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Excellent. Detail resolution is great for the money and bass is taut and powerful.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Voyager All Cu	170	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent - its open nature and rhythmic delivery ensures an enjoyable listen.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Audio Note AN-C	60	08.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Basic presentation is very musical, but tonal flaws mean they aren't up to rivals.	●			1		●				●		
Audioquest Copperhead	72.95	08.02/GT	★★★★☆	Produces a seamless presentation that has plenty of punch and speed.	●			0.75	6	●				●		●
Audioquest Diamondback	95	03.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Beautifully assembled and feels worth the cash but it lacks the dynamics of others.		●		1	8	●				●		●
Black Rhodium Illusion	80	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Intriguing - looks thin and weedy, but sounds rich, powerful and direct.			●	1.0	2.8	●	●			●		

Merlin
High performance audio cables
Quality speaks for itself...
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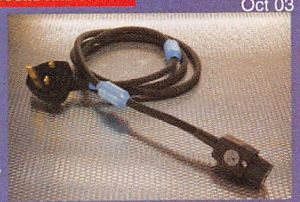
C6 Speaker Cable
"...a cracking cable... great performer..."
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 CABLES BEST STEREO INTERCONNECT MERLIN CHOPIN
WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2003
Chopin Analogue Interconnect

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Oct 03

Black Widow Mains Block
"...little choice but to commend Merlin's magic..."
WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2002 ACCESSORIES Mains Lead
Black Widow Mains Lead

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
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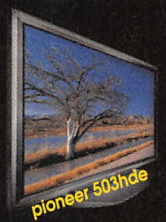

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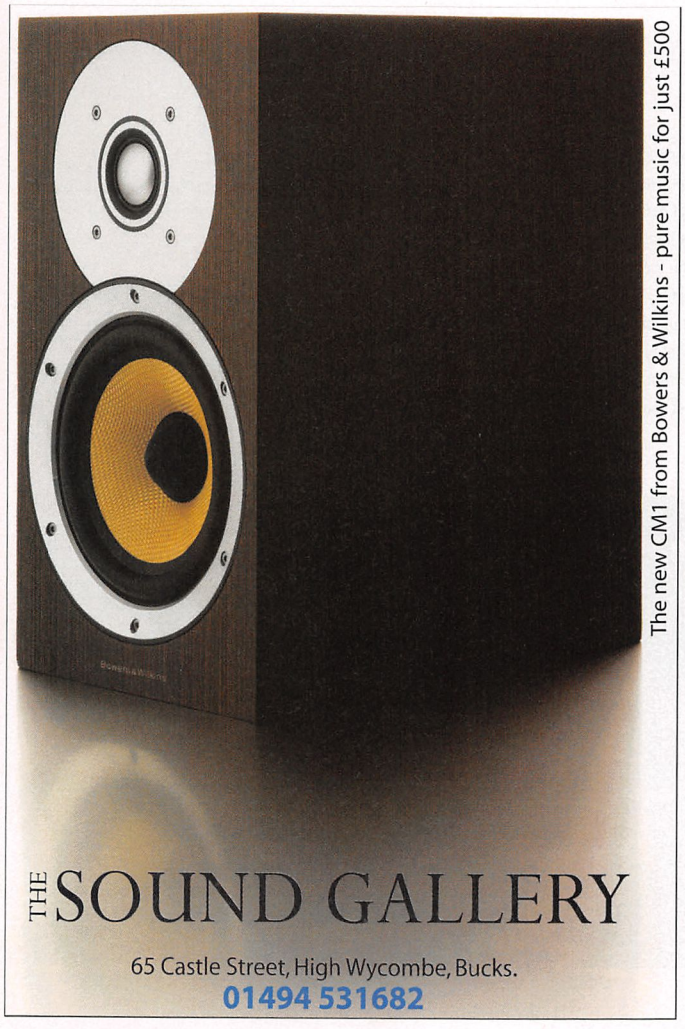

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Analogue interconnects continued...

Use a dedicated lead and sonic delivery takes a jump

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	Directional
Black Rhodium Melody	35	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Up against supplied cables this is a very worthwhile leap in sonic quality.	●			1.0	6.3	●				●		
Black Rhodium Opera	297	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Almost justifies its hefty cost, but not quite.		●		1.0	5.6		●			●		
Black Rhodium Polar Melody	95	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Solid presentation but bass lacks weight and high frequencies lacks clarity.	●			1.0	6.3	●				●		
Black Rhodium Polar Rhythm	135	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Likeable but the level of performance on offer doesn't quite match the asking price.	●			1.0	5.5	●	●			●		
Cambridge Audio Atlantic	10	03.96/GT	★★★☆☆	Pocket money upgrade, consider if your system errs towards the over-bright.	●			1.0	6.0	●				●		
Cambridge Audio Pacific	30	03.96/GT	★★★★★	Worth every penny. Immediately attention-grabbing detail and open expression.	●			1.0	6.0	●				●		
Chord Company Calypso	30	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	The fine upper bass punch and fluid midrange make this a solid buy.	●			1.0	0.8	●				●		●
Chord Company Chorus	215	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards '01. Terrifically deep bass, taut midrange and spacious top-end.	●			1.0	7.5	●	●			●	●	●
Chord Company Chrysalis	43	02.99	★★★☆☆	Highly Recommended, Awards '97. Especially suitable if you're after bigger bass.	●			1.0	4.8	●				●	●	●
Chord Company Cobra 3	60	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Worthy partner to the Carnival Silver speaker cable - very musical delivery.	●			1.0	6.5	●				●		●
Cyrus Interconnect	90	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Great buy. Crisp dynamics and breathtaking transparency considering the price.		●	●	0.5		●				●		●
DNM Reson	40	10.98/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Combines smoothness with fine transparency.		●	●	1		●				●		●
DNM Reson Bullet Plug	80	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year, Awards 2002. Most open-sounding we've heard under £100.		●	●	1		●				●		
Ecosse Best Boy	26	11.03/GT	★★★★★	No looker, but it's honest and affordable, giving fine performance for the money.	●			1.0		●				●		
Ecosse Conductor CA-1 Original	65	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Winner 2000. Allows all genres of music to sound their best.	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse Maestro MA2 Original	175	10.99/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy, Awards 2000. Sonically they amaze. High-end system owners take note.	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse Nu Diva	125	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Not cheap, but they will take your listening experience to a new level.	●			0.8	8.0	●	●			●		
Ecosse The Baton RCA	85	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Fine punch and authority - this is a good, but not great, interconnect.	●			0.8		●				●		●
Ecosse The Composer	32	08.01/GT	★★★★★	A stellar interconnect - the signal is so well preserved it's hard to believe the price	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse The Symphony	229	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Authoritive and detailed, a real all-rounder, but it is 10 percent too pricey.	●			0.8	11.2	●	●			●	●	●
Insert Audio Focus 1.2 (pair)	21.50	10.98/FT	★★★★☆	A step-up from freebie cables - dynamic and fast, it is ideal for hard-hitting music.	●			1.0m	7	●				●	●	●
Insert Audio IC100 Mk II (pair)	29.95	01.99/FT	★★★★☆	Good, affordable interconnect. Produces an exciting, raw and enjoyable sound.	●			1.0m	8	●	●			●	●	●
Insert Audio Image 5.1 (pair)	84.95	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Not bad, but there are better stereo interconnects available at this price.	●			1	7	●	●			●	●	●
Ixos XHA306-100	20	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for entry-level. Ditch the cable that came with your budget kit and buy these.	●			1.0		●				●		
Ixos XHA406-100	30	08.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Fluid-sounding with a refined delivery. Would be useful in an overly bright system.	●			1		●				●		●
Ixos XHA606-100	60	08.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Designed to reduce interference, but the resulting sound is lazy and undynamic.	●		●	1		●	●			●		●
Ixos XHA806-100	100	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Uses impressive gamma-weave noise rejection technology but are disappointing.	●			1		●	●			●		●
Kimber Timbre	89	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Bags of impact and clarity - doesn't work well with bright-sounding kit.	●			1.0	6	●				●	●	●
Kimber Tonik	51	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Cohesive and informative - will give fine results in most budget systems.	●			1		●				●	●	●
LAT International IC-100 MkII	120	03.98	★★★★☆	Delivers to amps the sort of bass subwoofers love - fast, extended and exciting.		●		1.0	8.5	●	●			●	●	●
LAT International IC-200 MkII	150	10.97	★★★☆☆	Fine levels of detail, resolution and bass but there's a fierce streak in its treble.		●		1.0	8.5	●	●			●	●	●
Merlin Bach	50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good, fast and capable but rivals offer greater refinement.	●			0.75		●				●		
Merlin Chopin	85	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo interconnect over £50 in Awards 2005. Superb.	●		●	1.0	12	●				●		●

Merlin Chopin

If your budget or midrange system needs a kick up the posterior, then invest in this interconnect. It allows for a clean and open delivery that excites and invigorates and is adept at soothing the senses with its sweet and subtle high frequencies. The Chopin will give your CD collection a new lease of life.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST STEREO INTERCONNECT
MERLIN CHOPIN

Merlin Verdi	185	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Not cheap. Its performance makes it well worth the money in the right system.	●			1.0	9	●				●		●
Monster I 400 MkII	45	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fine balance and weight - a good match for neutral or rich electronics.	●			1.0		●				●		
Nordost Black Knight	72	04.97/FT	★★★★★	Clean sounding - enhanced clarity, extended bandwidth and dynamic resolution.		●	●	1	flat	●				●	●	●
Nordost Blue Heaven	110	10.99/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting and full of attack and drive but up-front sound won't suit everyone.	●		●	1	flat	●	●			●	●	●
Nordost Cinemaflex Bassline Sub	303	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	If you have a very good subwoofer in your set-up buy this great sounding cable.	●		●	5	flat	●	●			●	●	●

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Analogue interconnects continued...

Use a dedicated lead and sonic delivery takes a jump

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	Directional
Nordost Red Dawn	200	05.98/FT	★★★★☆	At this price it's one for high-end set-ups, but an exhilarating listen.	●		●	1	flat	●	●			●	●	●
Nordost Solar Wind	100	03.98/GT	★★★★★	Technically interesting and fine-sounding - this is one exciting cable.	●		●	1		●	●			●	●	●
Profigold PGA-3000	45	04.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Solidly-made cable. Will flatter systems that tend towards thinness or brightness.	●			0.75		●				●		●
QED Qunex 4 Silver	60	09.00/GT	★★★★☆	Classy looking cable that will handle whatever you throw at it with ease.	●			1	8.1	●	●			●		●
QED Qunex One	20	02.99	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 1999. Staggeringly good value (was called Qnect 1).	●			1	6.0	●				●		●
QED Qunex Silver Spiral	90	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Sparkling delivery and presents tunes with good space - lacks the finest dymanics.	●			1.0	8.1	●	●			●		
QED Qunex Two	30	03.98	★★★★★	Highly Recommended, Awards 1998. Weighty and involving (was Qnect).	●			1	6.1	●				●		●
Roksan HDC-02A	85	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Truly excellent performer, boasting a wide range of sonic talents, at a fair price	●			1		●				●		●
Supra EFF-ISL (pair)	90	08.99	★★★☆☆	It's expensive, yet it's an unexciting source-to-amp connection.	●			0.75	7	●	●			●		●
True Colours Industries Cobra	200	11.03/GT	★★★★★	In upmarket set-ups this is an interconnect that will really shine - tested at £175.	●			1.0	6.5	●	●			●	●	●
True Colours Industries Tiger	30	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Looks cheap but, surprisingly, sound quality is polished for the money.	●			1.0	3	●	●			●		
True Colours Industries Viper	70	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	A capable and well-priced interconnect - definitely worth an audition.	●			1.0	6	●				●	●	●
True Colours Industries ViperSix	180	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Six channel - insightful but perhaps too restrained for some ears.	●			1.0	21	●				●		●
van den Hul D102 III HB	110	05.98	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2001. Smooth, natural and detailed. (Was £79)	●			0.8	7.3	●	●	●		●	●	●
van den Hul Integration Hybrid	150	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully refined sound but doesn't quite justify its pricetag.	●			0.8	7.8				●	●	●	●
van den Hul The Bay C5	65	04.02/GT	★★★★★	A very good all-round performance cable, and excellent value.	●			0.8	5.2	●				●		
van den Hul The First Ultimate	250	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Stunning - if your system's good, these interconnects are highly recommended.	●			1	7.8			●		●		
van den Hul The Name	45	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo interconnect under £50 in Awards 2004. Cracking choice.	●			0.8m	7.3	●	●			●		●
van den Hul The Second	225	10.96	★★★☆☆	A well-made cable, enjoyable but not remarkable at the price.	●			1	7.3			●		●	●	
van den Hul The Source)	85	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Wonderfully-balanced wire for the money - we recommend it without hesitation.	●			0.8	7.0	●	●	●		●		●
van den Hul The Thunderline	130	01.97	★★★★☆	Need warmth and weight? This cop/carbon/sl cable has powerful bass delivery.	●			0.8	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Vivanco Prowire PHC2215	12	Awd00/FT	★★★★☆	Good value. Allows a weighty and powerful sound. A good step-up from freebies.	●			1.5		●				●		●
Vivanco Prowire SHQ	30	11.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Nicely put together, but it sounds a bit soft and woolly even by budget standards.	●			1.2		●	●			●		●
Wireworld Luna 5	30	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Don't let the cheap price tag deceive you, this is a very solid budget performer.	●			1.0	5.0	●				●		●
Wireworld Oasis 5	100	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers more space and dymanics than others but it lacks just a touch of insight.	●			1.0	7	●				●		●
Wireworld Rainbow 5	150	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Six-channel cable - musical and punchy, with bags of attack and detail.	●			1.0	5x6/5	●	●			●		●

Mains cables, blocks & conditioners

Make the most of your equipment with superior mains cabling

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Cable	Block	Conditioner	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Captive lead	No of sockets	Figure of 8 (2pin)	IEC (3pin)
Black Rhodium Power Management	300	10.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Boosts top- and bottom-end refinement, but reduces pure sonic punch.		●	●	2.0	●	●			●	8		●
Black Rhodium Super Mains	100	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	An improvement over a kettle lead, but not a super mains cable - there's better.	●			1.25	●	●						
Black Rhodium Super Mains 13	55	12.98/GT	★★★★☆	We noticed better bass extension and a more mellifluous treble.	●			1.25	●	●						
Clearer Audio Copper-Line	95	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best mains lead in Awards 2005. Gets that extra ounce of performance out.	●			1.0	●							

Clearer Audio Copper-Line

If you want an affordable upgrade to deliver that extra ounce of performance then this is it. Plug it into you CD player and there's a surge of sonic sparkle. You're treated to a greater sense of clarity and transparency. The Copper-line manages to generate a renewed sense of enthusiasm, so tracks are heard in a new light.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST MAINS LEAD
CLEARER AUDIO COPPER-LINE

Ecosse The Big Orange	35	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Looks pretty unusual but its sonics cut the mustard.	●			1.0	●							
Ecosse The Big Red	120	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Mean-looking bit of wire with decent balance and attack.	●			1.2	●							

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Mains cables, blocks & conditioners continued...

Make the most of your equipment with superior mains cabling

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Cable	TYPE: Block	TYPE: Conditioner	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	Captive lead	No of sockets	Figure of 8 (2pin)	IEC (3pin)
Isol-8 Cleanline 2	295	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Beats your regular supply from the mains but it's no class leader.			●	-						6		
IsoTek Elite	80	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	It sounds miles better than a free cable, but falls well short of full marks.	●			1.5	●							
IsoTek Gemini 6-way	260	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning performer giving a good overall tonal balance.		●								6		
IsoTek GII Vision	595	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Best mains filter in Awards 2004. One of the most cost-effective upgrades.			●							6		
IsoTek Isoplug	30	01.03/FT	★★★★☆	Eliminates mains noise, which could mean a smoother-sounding system.			●									
IsoTek MiniSub	549	08.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Improves detail and transparency levels.		●	●							6		
IsoTek Titan	1495	06.05/FT	★★★★★	It's not cheap, but in the right set-up it works wonderfully well.			●	-						2		
Merlin Black Widow (4-way)	150	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Delivers a lovely rhythmic style, complete with detail and an even tone balance.		●		2m	●					4		
Merlin Black Widow v2	85	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive but its delivery isn't quite as clear as we'd like for this money.	●			1.5	●							
Merlin Red Back	35	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Maintains the traditional Merlin characteristics of great detail and poise.	●			1.0	●							
Merlin Tarantula	50	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Offers killer value and sounds simply magical.	●			1.5	●							
Merlin Tarantula 4-way	100	08.03/FT	★★★★★	A cost-effective way to boost the bass weight and detail levels of your system.		●		2	●				●	4		●
Merlin Tarantula Figure '8'	50	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Affordable upgrade - improvements are big enough to make it a worthy buy.	●			1.5	●							
Monster Power Centre HTS1000	160	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	This filtered mains block performs better than standard mains blocks.		●	●							8		
Nordost Shiva	220	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Levels of detail are excellent, but sound is slightly lean and cost slightly steep.	●			2.0	●	●						
One Click Intelligent Mains Panel	30	08.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Allows you to switch off all your kit with one button - fine, if that's what you want.		●							●	6		●
Russ Andrews 'The Silencer'	40	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Gives a smooth and polished sound and extra bass weight to your system.			●									
Russ And. Classic PowerKord W320i	75	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Best mains lead under £100 in Awards 2004. Impressively clean delivery.	●			1.27	●							
Russ Andrews Ref Powerkord	115	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Not quite as good value as the Award winning £75 Classic PowerKord.	●			1.27	●				●			●
Russ Andrews The Powerlink	80	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Offers a smooth and clean sound - sadly it is bettered around this price range.		●		2m	●							
Supra Lorad CS-BS	35	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	One of the most cost-effective upgrades you can make.	●			1.5	●							
Tacima IF-I23 (SC5690)	179	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Works well with bright, aggressive hi-fi, but don't use on high-end kit			●	-						6		
True Colours Ind Constrictor	100	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Has a vice-like grip but an open delivery. Uncovers nuances previously missed.	●			1.1	●	●						
van den Hul Mainsstr BS Hybrid	250	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best mains lead over £100 in Awards 2004. Singularly most effective upgrade.	●			2.5	●	●						
van den Hul The Mainsserver	100	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Offers a refined approach - clear choice for those who aren't in a sonic hurry.	●			1.5	●	●						
Wireworld Stratus 5 Power Cord	130	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Expensive, but this substantial cable is worth every penny - hugely impressive.	●			2	●							

Speaker stands

Essential to make the best of any standmounted speaker

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DIMENSIONS: Height (cm)	DIMENSIONS: Width (cm)	DIMENSIONS: Depth (cm)	MATERIAL: Steel	MATERIAL: Aluminium	MATERIAL: Concrete	MATERIAL: Wood	MATERIAL: Glass	MATERIAL: Carbon	Fillable	Top-plate spkies	Floor spkies
Alphason AG50	99	12.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Performance and construction are disappointing at this price.	50	25	27	●						●		●
Apollo A1/6	40	02.99/GT	★★★★☆	Effective, if a little crude, being reasonably weighty and very rigid.	61	21	26	●						●		●
Apollo A2/5	55	08.98	★★★☆☆	Simple and affordable - do a decent job in an entry-level system.	51	20	26	●						●		●
Apollo A4/6	80	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Beautifully built with an outstanding sound - a real bargain.	61	20	26	●						●		●
Apollo AZ range	110	08.96	★★★★☆	Music's strong and vibrant, bass weight excellent. Best in large rooms.	41-61	26	31	●						●		●
Apollo Olympus	85	12.96	★★★★★	Rock steady: speakers enjoy sharper focus and tighter bass.	41-61	28	28	●						●		●
Atacama Nexus 6 (black)	60	12.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000. A steal for build, price and sonic balance.	60	25	30	●						●		●
Atacama R724 (black)	250	01.02/GT	★★★★☆	Fine choice for top speakers - maximise punch and bass response.	60	26	35	●						●	●	●
Atacama SE6	100	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good, even-handed all-round performer with some neat design touches.	60	25	30	●						●		●
Epos ST35	99	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine stands that work well with the right speakers.	56	17	15	●							●	●
Kudos S100	495	01.02/GT	★★★★★	Excellent, offering fine imaging, strong focus and outstanding bass.	61	32	32	●					●	●	●	●
Kudos S50	160	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Weighty build and first-class performance, but rivals do it cheaper.	61	32	32	●						●		●

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★★★★★ Excellent
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★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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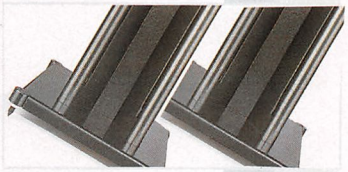
Speaker stands continued...

Essential to make the best of any standmounted speaker

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DIMENSIONS Height (cm)	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	MATERIAL Steel	Aluminium	Concrete	Wood	Glass	Carbon	Fillable	Top-plate spkies	Floor spkies
Mission Stance	100	08.03/GT	★★★★☆	Competent, but the resulting sound can lack authority and presence.	58	21	28	●						●	●	●
Mission Stancette	60	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Good all-round performers and attractive design. Excellent for the price.	57	17	23	●								●
Partington Dreadnought Broadside	250	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Expensive but justifiable, improvements to sound are amazing.	60			●						●		●
Partington Super Dreadnought	169	08.03/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker stands in Awards 2005. Dramatic boost to a system.	60	16	17	●						●		●



Partington Super Dreadnought

If you want to improve the sonic performance of any standmount speakers, the Super Dreadnoughts provide the perfect platform for your cabinets to perform. These stands simply let speakers get on with the task of performing at their best – imaging is more precise and bass delivery is weighty, yet fast and fluid.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ACCESSORIES
BEST SPEAKER STANDS
PARTINGTON SUPER DREADNOUGHT

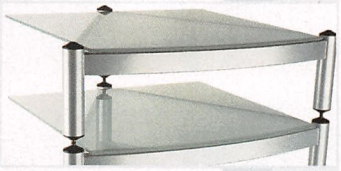
Sound Organisation Z522	100	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Heavyweight build quality but restrictive dynamics.	57	25	30	●						●	●	●
Soundstyle ST122	120	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Full marks for aesthetics, but performace falls short of the best.	57	23	28	●						●	●	●
Stands Unique Reflection	349	01.02/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant, slim-pillar designs - offer open treble and plenty of agility.	60	17	20				●	●	●		●	●

Equipment racks

Provide a solid, secure and stylish home for your treasured kit

BUDGET Up to £1100

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	Height (cm)	No of shelves	Shelf size (wd) cm	MATERIAL Steel	Aluminium	Wood	Glass	Other	Glass shelves
Alphason AD3/105-s	349	04.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Solid and stylish affair - others get better results from your kit.	54	118	45	3	105/45	●					●
Alphason AD5/ 47CPB	269	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	It's aesthetically pleasing but it won't suit pricier hi-fi systems.	72	61	52	5	47/52	●					
Alphason Aragon AG54/2	105	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Best with mini systems and other light, budget kit.	79	54	44	2	54x33	●					●
Apollo Mezzo Soprano	390	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	This is a superbly versatile rack that reveals fine sound and pictures.	48	55	45	3	55/45	●					●
Atacama Equinox	300	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Accessories Product of the Year, Equinox range, in Awards 2005.	90	55	55	4	50x50	●			●		●



Atacama Equinox

This year's accessories Product of the Year is the same as last year's. It makes such a difference to systems it has heard to be believed: bass notes come to life, any treble harshness is softened, and the midrange and vocals become more open and natural. Costing from £140, these modular units are superb upgrade.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ACCESSORIES
ATACAMA EQUINOX RANGE

Atacama Equinox AV	400	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Accessories Product of the Year, Equinox range, in Awards 2005.	61	106	55	3	97x51	●			●		●
Atacama Europa Ref 8	400	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Beautiful looks that will suit most homes and stunning sonic capabilities.	69	80	40	4	68x40		●				●
Audiophilebase Stdard Base	1032	07.98/GT	★★★★★	Can find an extra level of detail and subtlety. (Tested at £615).	68	57	47	4	57/47		●	●			
Audiophilebase StarBase	1063	12.02/FT	★★★★★	It isn't cheap, but its one of the best supports we've come across.	65	59	52	3	59/52		●	●			
Clearlight Audio Aspekt	550	04.02/FT	★★★★★	One of the best equipment supports around, if your system justifies it.	75	66	57	4	48/40			●		●	
Clearlight Aspekt Double Helix	800	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent system enhancer - build and finish don't justify price.	75	66	57	4	48x40			●		●	
Custom Design Aspect 850	330	03.01/GT	★★★★☆	This is a product that helps deliver tonal evenness and clarity.	85	56	46	5	37x46	●					●
Custom Design Concept 400	320	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent build quality and neat looks, plus a clear and controlled delivery.	70	49	40	2	47x37	●					●
Custom Design e'lite E5	300	10.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Good, with the distance between shelves adjustable, but not great.	69	62	51	5	37x47	●					●
Custom Design Tuscan 4	200	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	A mediocre rack from Custom Design in terms design and performance.	50	35	43	4	53x43	●					●
Custom Design Ultra Corner 3AV	380	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Clever stand presents an enjoyable picture and allows for vibrant sound.	53	113	51	3	113x52	●					●
Futureglass Gem Separates	400	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Combines great styling with clever flexibility - don't use with bright kit.	65	60	40	4	49x28	●					●
Henley MR5	350	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Flexible but sound-wise it's outclassed - don't use for bright electronics.	91	56	50	5	54x45		●				●
Optimum AVFF3 SL	349	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Affordable, space-friendly rack, perfect for small spaces and flat screens.	58	110	40	3	110x61	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 4000	299	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	No-nonsense design that is highly competent and well built.	61	61	52	4	46x37	●					●

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Equipment racks continued...

Provide a solid, secure and stylish home for your treasured kit

BUDGET Up to £1100

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	Height (cm)	No of shelves	Shelf size (wd) cm	MATERIAL: Steel	Aluminium	Wood	Glass	Other	Glass shelves
Optimum OPT 4906	250	09.99/GT	★★★★☆	The Optimum looks good, sounds good and is reasonably priced.	61	61	52	4	61x52	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 5000	350	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	The OPT 5000 is a sturdy product that provides sharp focus and imaging.	79	61	52	5	61x52	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 5500	350	03.01/GT	★★★★☆	An excellent design from Optimum that's stable and simple looking.	81	61	52	5	61x52	●			●		●
Partington Minim	389	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Superb AV rack - so sonically effective even fine details are improved.	59	160	54	3	160x54	●					●
Quadraspire Q4	500	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	The acrylic Q4 delivers an enjoyable sound; a rack to aspire to.	50	60	40	4	60x40		●			●	
Soundstyle ST310	395	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish and roomy AV rack but you're limited to just three shelves.	27	45	21	3	38x21	●					●
Soundstyle Status ST100	350	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Ultra-stable; a class leading performance and worth every penny.	80	78	54	4	57x47	●					●
Soundstyle XS105	345	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Fine rack, reveals great dynamics and tight, powerful bottom end.	92	67	49	5	56x48	●					●
Target CL430	229	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid number both in terms of performance and build.	80	61	48	4	47x48			●		●	
Target S230	200	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Big, solid piece that can both hold things up well, and perform brilliantly.	61	57	83	4	49x50	●		●			
Townshend Versatile Siesmic Sink	1400	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Pricey but effective - you'll gasp at the difference it can make to your kit.	70	52	38	4	48x38	●					●
Triskom HC-06	499	04.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Attractive wooden construction but it's not especially good value.	52	100	57	3	100x57			●			●
Triskom Tower 12	450	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Well-designed - soundstage and dynamics feel a little restrained.	100	57	50	6	57x45			●			●

Headphones

A top pair of cans provides a bargain route to quality sounds

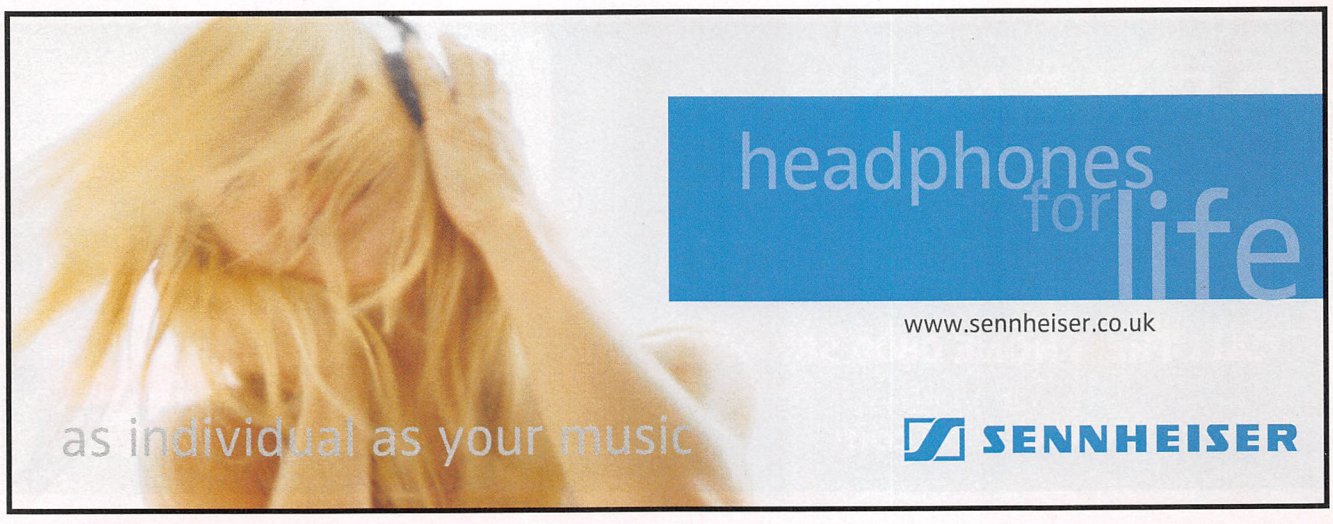
BUDGET Up to £750

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: In-ear	On-ear	Over-ear	Open	Closed	Weight (g)	3.5mm jack	6.3mm jack	Cable length (m)	Impedance (ohms)
AKG Hearo 777 Quadra	225	12.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Wireless headphones from AKG that can simulate eight speakers in the cans.			●	●		320	●	●	n/a	
AKG K-66	30	04.00	★★★☆☆	These don't suit long listening sessions, but work a treat with the classics.			●	●		210	●	●	3	32
AKG K141 Monitor	87	07.02/GT	★★★☆☆	A retro design and surprisingly comfortable, but they lack dynamic range.		●		●		225	●	●	3	600
AKG K14P	15	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cheap and cheerful - deliver an enjoyable listening experience.	●			●		5.0	●		1.15	126
AKG K24P	22	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent value for money - their exciting, dynamic delivery will win admirers.		●		●		62	●		1.5	32
AKG Merlin 232	200	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Wireless, well-designed and largely effective - worth a look if you want to go wireless.			●	●		172	●		-	-
Altec Lansing Oyoyo	20	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Uncomfortable to wear and the performance is sub-standard.		●		●		127	●		-	32
B&O A8	90	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	If you're keen on making a style statement these are certainly worth considering.	●			●		22	●		1.2	19
Beyer DT 990	160	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Use a suitable headphone amplifier and you're guaranteed a pleasant listen.			●	●		250	●	●	3	250
Beyer DT231 Galactic	40	Awd01/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Delivers with confidence and dynamic agility.			●		●	130	●	●	2.5	32
Beyer DTX700	45	03.04/FT	★★★☆☆	This product provides a hefty, punchy listen, but the excitable treble can be tiring.			●	●		180	●	●	3	32
Beyer DTX800	55	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	The Beyer DTX800 is good in parts, but at this price they rate only average.			●	●		190	●	●	3	32
Beyer DTX900	65	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Impressive, and would be ideal for regular headphone users looking for comfort.			●	●		180	●	●	3	32
Bose TriPort	120	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent pair of headphones - weighty delivery and great style and build quality.			●		●	142	●	●	1.3	
Etymotic Research ER-6i Isolator	100	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	These iPod-aimed phones get to the core of tunes but the fit is intrusive.	●				●	12	●		1.5	48
Grado RS1	750	04.04/GT	★★★★★	A ludicrously pricey pair of headphones but the sound is that good - really!			●	●		255		●	2	32
Grado SR325i	310	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Expensive, but worth it as long as the rest of your system is up to scratch.			●	●		200		●	2	32
Grado SR60	90	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi headphones in Awards 2005. Offer a remarkably airy, open sound.			●	●		200	●	●	2	32

Grado SR60

These have been on our list of favourite accessories since 1999, and we've yet to hear more impressive sub-£100 headphones. They have a remarkably airy, open sound that dissects music in a way you may not have experienced before: prepare to hear previously buried instruments on your favourite tracks.

Grado SR80	110	02.98/GT	★★★★★	Truly wonderful - they may not look it but these headphones are a bit special.			●	●		200	●	●	2	32



RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Headphones continued...

A top pair of cans provides a bargain route to quality sounds

BUDGET Up to £750

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: In-ear	On-ear	Over-ear	Open	Closed	Weight (g)	3.5mm jack	6.3mm jack	Cable length (m)	Impedance (ohms)
Ixos XMM-607	100	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Wireless system is effective but they're ungainly and the sonic quality isn't great.			●	●		66	●		-	-
Panasonic RP-HC50	30	12.03/GT	★★★☆☆	OK if you're after noise-cancelling on the cheap, but not great for everyday listening.	●					7	●			
Panasonic RP-WF905A(wireless)	55	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Cheap system, but poor reception and nasty earbud 'phones let it down.	●						●			
Panasonic RP-WF930(cordless)	60	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Sensible pricing, but they fail to inspire due to their overly 'safe' balance.			●	●					0	
Philips HD1500(cordless surr)	350	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Extremely capable and the sound is lovely, but the high price loses them a star.			●	●		n/a			-	-
Pioneer SE-DIR800C (cordless surr)	295	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Easy to use and comfortable, but sound quality disappoints considering the price.			●	●		250			-	
Sennheiser HD 270	80	11.00/GT	★★★★☆	If you want to lock yourself away these circumaural headphones are for you.			●	●		220	●	●	3	64
Sennheiser HD 280 Pro	100	04.04/GT	★★★★★	The HD280 Pros are terrific all-rounders - particularly recommended for DJs.			●	●		220	●	●	n/a	64
Sennheiser HD25	170	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Show that closed-back headphones don't have to mean a closed-in sound.			●	●		140	●	●	1.5	70
Sennheiser HD555	100	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Another impressive pair of headphones from Sennheiser. Standard at-home design.			●	●		260	●	●	3	120
Sennheiser HD650	300	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Pricey, but with the right standard of system they are a must listen product.			●	●		260	●	●	3	300
Sennheiser MX500 White	25	09.05/FT	★★★★★	White to match your iPod - sound immeasurably better than any bundled in-ears.	●					6	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser MX500(in-ear)	20	01.01/FT	★★★★★	Delivers much better bass, imaging and tonal purity than freebie in-ears.	●					6	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser PMX100	35	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Unless you really must have a neckband design, we'd buy the PX100s instead.		●		●		60	●		1.4	32
Sennheiser PMX60	30	12.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Diappointing neckband 'phones - non-adjustable neckband and thin sound.			●		●	55	●	●	1.0	32
Sennheiser PX10	20	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Haven't got the quality or user-friendly appeal of others.	●			●		n/a	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser PX100	35	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best portable headphones in Awards 2005. Faultless sonic ability.		●		●		60	●	●	1.4	32
Sennheiser PXC150	80	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Noise-cancelling design - ideal for noisy commutes, you'll hear more detail.		●			●	65	●		1.8	300
Sennheiser PXC250(noise-cancel)	90	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Noise cancelling 'phones - ideal travel companion for music-loving frequent flyers.		●			●	65	●	●	1.8	300
Sennheiser PXC300(noise-cancel)	129	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Superb if you want to listen to music - rather than your fellow commuters.		●			●	65	●		1.8	300
Shure E2c	60	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Their ultra-snug fit won't suit everyone, but you'll enjoy an impressive sound.	●					30	●		1.57	16
Sony MDR-ED21LP	20	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Superb - these Sonys are an ideal, affordable upgrade for portable users.	●					5	●	●	1	16
Sony MDR-EX71SL	35	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Stylish but, considering the price, they give a disappointing sonic performance.	●			●		4.0	●		0.5	16
Sony MDR-V700DJ	100	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	In some respects they're impressive headphones, but sound quality is patchy.			●		●	300	●	●	3	24
Technics RP-DH1200	117	11.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Aimed at the DJ market - they are real disappointment to use.			●		●	n/a		●	n/a	50
Technics RP-DH1200E	135	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Not the last word in fidelity but these DJ headphone are effective and built to last.			●	●		435	●	●	1.2	50
Turbosound in-ear headphones	20	09.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Designed to protect your hearing, sadly they are uncomfortable and music-killing.	●					16	●		1.0	

Remote controls

Control all your equipment from a single handset

BUDGET Up to £200

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Batteries	Battery life (h)	Rechargeable	Backlight	Touchscreen	Macro functions	PC programmable	Dimensions (hxwxd) cm
Cambridge Audio M1+Explorer	50	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Bargain - its large LCD display and quick learning make it a joy to use.	4xAAA			●	●	●		180x3x8
Logitech Harmony 525	70	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Offers most of the capability of the H655 but looks much classier - it's a peach.	4xAAA			●		●	●	21x5x3
Logitech Harmony H655	80	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best universal remote control in Awards 2005. Brilliant set-up software.	4xAAA			●		●	●	21x6x

Logitech Harmony H655

This is superb learning remote control – you simply set it up using your PC or Mac, and the brilliant set-up software makes the configuration process a breeze. The unit even allows for simple 'macro' functions, so you can turn on several devices at the push of a single button, and lots of other tricks you'll love!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ACCESSORIES
BEST UNIVERSAL REMOTE CONTROL
LOGITECH HARMONY H655

Nevo SL	650	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005. Wi-Fi control and huge IR database.	Litheum	-	●	●	●	●	●	19x8x3
Philips ProntoNEO SBCRU930	200	09.02/FT	★★★★★	Makes your system simple enough for anyone to operate - a worthwhile upgrade.	3xAA			●	●	●	●	18x7x3

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MP3 players

Store up to 10,000 tunes and take them everywhere you go

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Microphone	Storage capacity	USB	USB 1.1	USB 2.0	FireWire	PC	Mac	Battery life	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (gm)
Apple iPod 20GB	209	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Best MP3 player in Awards 2005. Great sound and easy to use.	●		●			20G			●	●	●	●	12	10x6x1.6	167
Apple iPod Nano	179	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Best ultraportable MP3 player in Awards 2005.	●		●			4G		●	●		●	●	14	9x4x0.69	42

Apple iPod Nano

The sexiest iPod ever. Its slimline, solid-state build and exciting sound make it the ideal ultraportable music companion. It sounds better than the Mini, which it replaced - tauter bass being the main benefit. It can play Apple Lossless files, which boosts its performance potential still further, and has a colour screen.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
MP3 PLAYERS & ACCESSORIES
BEST ULTRAPORTABLE MP3 PLAYER
APPLE iPOD NANO

Apple iPod Photo 60GB	299	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Fourth-generation iPod with a colour screen to view photos.	●		●			60G	●	●	●	●	●	●	15	6.1x10.4xx1.9	181
Apple iPod Shuffle	89	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Chewing-gum-sized unit with a big memory and great sound.	●		●			1G	●	●	●		●	●	12	2.5x8.4x0.84	22
Archos AV400	400	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best multimedia portable in Awards 2004. High standards.	●	●				20G		●			●	●	12	13x8x2	280
Archos AV500	350	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Offers lots of features but newer rivals are more user-friendly.	●	●				30G			●		●	●	15	12x8x1.8	260
Archos AV700	400	10.05/FT	★★★★★	A digital party in your pocket - video quality is good.	●	●				40G		●	●		●	●	-	11x21x1.9	590
Archos Gmini 400	235	03.05/GT	★★★★★	A genuine master of all trades in the portable market.	●	●			●	20G	●	●	●		●	●	10	6x11x1.7	160
B&O Beosound 2	325	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but breathtakingly beautiful and it sounds exciting.	●	●		●		512M					●	●	8	7.3x	4.5
Creative MuVo Slim	80	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant and attractive, but it doesn't match the class leaders.	●	●		●	●	256M	●	●	●		●		17	9x6x.5	34
Creative Zen Micro	150	07.05/ST	★★★★☆	Neat and sounds good, but isn't as easy to use as some rivals	●	●		●	●	5G			●	●	●		12	5x9x2	108
Creative Zen Nano Plus	80	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Generous specification and decent sound for the money.	●	●		●	●	256M	●	●	●		●		15	7x3x1.3	34
Creative Zen Sleek	200	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Awesome player that looks pretty damn dinky.	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●		16	6x10x1.7	157
Creative Zen Touch 20GB	180	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Creative's most impressive jukebox yet.	●	●		●		20G	●	●	●		●		24	7x11x2	203
Creative Zen Touch 40GB	230	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Massive memory, great operation and excellent sound.	●	●				40GB			●		●		24	10x6x2.2	220
Creative Zen Vision	370	12.05/ST	★★★★★	This is one impressive player - a delight to watch and listen to.	●			●	●	30G			●		●		13		
EZ-AV EMP-400	59	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Classier than the chromed EMP-500 - use better headphones.	●	●		●		128	●	●			●	●	17	77x4x1.6	43
i-Bead 200	150	UMP3.05	★★★★★	One of the best MP3 ultraportables we've come across.	●	●		●	●	256			●		●	●	14	9x3x1.8	38
iAudio 5	120	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Holds its own against stiff competition - holds a tune well too.	●	●		●	●	512M			●		●	●	20	8x4x1.8	28
iAudio F1	89	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Appealing for its looks and usability but not for the sound.	●	●		●	●	256			●		●	●	22	3x7x1.8	34
iAudio G3	124	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features but it could do with better sound quality.	●	●		●		512			●		●	●	50	6x5x1.7	36
iAudio M5	189	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Solidly built piece of kit but falls down on user-appeal.	●				●	20G			●		●	●	14	6x10x1.4	145
iAudio U2	124	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	A little bit of magic has been woven into this tiny ultraportable.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●	●	20	3x7x1.8	34
iriver H10	179	07.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Plenty of features but against new rivals it's fairly average.	●	●		●	●	5G	●	●	●	●	●		12	6x10x1.5	96
iriver H320	249	UMP3.05	★★★★☆	Impressive, especially the photo display device - decent sound.	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●		16	10x6x2.5	203
iriver H340	349	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Size, price and dreadful design cost it a couple of stars.	●	●		●	●	40			●		●	●	16	6x10x2	203
iriver N10	99	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great for gym-heads and those looking for a trendy trinket.	●	●			●	256M			●		●		12	6x3x1.3	24
iriver PMP-140	449	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Multimedia - quality screen and good file compatibility.	●	●		●		40G	●	●	●		●	●	16	14x8x3	299
iriver T10	140	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Sturdy, looks ready for extreme sports - let down by the sound.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●		50	9x4x2.9	49
iriver T30	100	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Too expensive and too confusing in the bass and midrange.	●	●				1G			●		●		20	6x3x2.2	27
Min of Sound Stix MP020	40	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Bona-fide bargain - winner for performance and features.	●	●				128M	●				●		15	9x4x2	25
Min of Sound 76X2 Stix	50	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Sound quality, value and great software make this a fine buy.	●	●				256M	●				●		8	9x3x1.0	25
Ministry of Sound MPO43 Stix	70	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent, inexpensive ultraportable for PCs and Macs.	●	●				256		●	●		●	●	15	9x3x1	25
Ministry of Sound MPO55	170	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Justifies its existence with a more-than-decent performance.	●	●			●	5G			●		●	●	10	6x8x1.7	80
MobiBLU DAH-1500	80	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Amazing little cube that's a delight to use - it sounds good, too.	●	●				256		●			●	●	256	2.4x2.4x2.4	18
Monolith II (MX-7010)	89	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Sleek and solid - delivers a more than respectable sound.	●	●		●	●	256		●			●		19	4x8x1.5	65
Monolith Slide (MX-7050)	89	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cool-looking with slide covers - sounds good too.	●	●		●		256		●			●	●	11	7x4x1.7d	50
MPeye HTS-200	159	UMP3.05	★★★★★	Seriously desirable little player with a good range of facilities.	●	●			●	5G			●		●	●	15	4x7x1.8	42

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MP3 players continued...

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PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS: MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Microphone	Storage capacity	USB	USB 1.1	USB 2.0	FireWire	PC	Mac	Battery life	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (gm)
Mpio HD200	169	07.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Promising specs are let down by its aesthetics and controls.	●	●		●	●	5G	●	●	●		●	●	10	6x8x1.5	55
Mpio One	120	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent player but not really the thing for watching video on.	●	●		●	●	256M			●		●	●	11	3x6x1.5	34.5
MPman MP-FOL6	70	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Easy player to get along with and offers decent capacity.	●	●				512M		●	●		●	●	10	8x2x1.5	28
MPman MP-HD2	70	UMP3.05	★★★★☆	Offers a decent performance considering the price.	●	●				1.5G		●	●		●	●	6	8x6x2.2	68
MPman MP-Ki 128	30	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Simple to use, sounds good and is phenomenally cheap.	●	●				128		●			●		10	8x3x1.5	35
Mustek PVR-A1	130	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Multimedia jukebox, cracking introduction to portable video.	●	●			●	32M		●			●		3.5	8x9x2	110
Mustek PVR-H140	260	04.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Portable media player - incredible price for what it can do.	●	●			●	40G	●	●	●		●	●	6	8x11x3	290
O2 Digital Music Player	100	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	We like its compatibility with SD cards but not the sound.						64M					●		7	10x5x2.2	90
Olympus m:robe MR-100	179	07.05/ST	★★★★☆	Killer looks and enjoyable sound but it's expensive.	●	●				5G	●	●	●		●		12	5x9x1.5	100
Olympus m:robe MR-500i	350	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features, but the sound quality is average and it's pricey.	●	●				20G			●		●		8	7x11x2.1	210
Oregon Scientific MP100	80	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Minuscule - its ultra-portable appeal is undeniable.	●	●		●		128M		●	●		●	●	10	4x3x2	28
Oregon Scientific MP120	100	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Waterproof and inexpensive - ideal for taking on holiday.	●	●		●		128		●	●		●		10	5x7x2	55
Oregon Scientific MP130	90	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	Handy built-in FM radio and Dictaphone - sound disappoints.	●	●		●	●	128			●		●		10	7x4x2.4	34
Oregon Scientific MP210	100	UMP3.05	★★☆☆☆	Slim, but limited battery life and storage for the money.	●	●		●	●	128					●	●	8	9x5x7	40
Packard Bell AudioDream Colour	99	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive - well specified and offers an exciting sound.	●	●		●	●	512			●		●		20	9x4x2	30
Panasonic SV-SD100V	99	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Tiny, shiny SD-Card based MP3 player - sounds good, too.	●	●	●	●	●	512M		●			●		14.5	4x4x1.8	27.4
QoolQee K7	140	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Highly kid-friendly package but it doesn't perform well.	●	●		●	●	1G		●			●	●	1G	5x8x2.5	58.6
Safecom SMFD-1G	89	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	Compact and affordable but the sound is nothing special.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●	●	10	9x3x1.9	35
Samsung PMC YH-999	370	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Easy to use - ideal for owners of Windows Media Center PCs.	●			●	●	20G		●	●		●		10	10x11x2.1	7.96
Samsung YH-820	169	07.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Impressive sound quality but let down by various irritations.	●	●			●	5G	●	●	●		●		12	5x9x1.5	85
Samsung YH-925	250	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Promises plenty, but delivers utterly average performance.	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●		10	11x6x1.7	150
Sharp HR-MB3	180	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	Decent effort, but there's nothing here to really excite us.	●	●				4G		●	●		●		20	11x6x1.7	113
Sony NW-E205	80	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great-looking and good-sounding player with punchy bass.	●					512M			●		●		50	4x7x2.3	45
Sony NW-E507	159	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great little player - a sound that never disappoints.	●			●		1G					●		20	8x3x1.4	47
Sony PSP Games Console	170	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Technololgy Best Buy in Awards 2005. Incredible with movies.	●					1.8G		●	●		●	●	5	21x11x1.9	590
Tapwave Zodiac 2	250	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning, truly portable player - games, music and movies.	●	●				128M	●	●	●		●		8	8x14x2	196
Tatung Elio	230	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Fair offering, but there are better players available at this price.	●	●			●	20G	●	●	●		●		12	7x17x1.9	179
Thomson Lyra PDP 2845	252	03.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good value but other products have more to offer.	●	●		●		40G	●	●	●		●		n/a	8x7x2.3	163
Thomson Lyra PDP2356K	50	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	You won't go far wrong with this cheap and effective player.	●	●				256	●	●	●		●		20	6x5x1.5	40
Thomson Lyra PDP2812	199	07.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Good sound and picture storage but glitches let it down.	●	●		●		5G	●	●	●		●		12	5x9x1.5	84
Thomson Lyra PDP2860	299	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Multimedia jukebox - isn't bad, but you can buy much better.	●	●				20G	●	●	●		●		12	14x8x2	297
Toshiba Gigabeat EG-F20	230	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Gorgeous looks and dynamic and rhythmic sound.	●	●				20G			●		●		16	11x6x1.6	160
Xen EMP-200	89	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers smooth sound and smart, easy-to-use design	●	●		●		128M		●			●	●	16	8x4x2	40

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Ministry of Sound MOSCD025	50	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Needlessly large so not as useful as others. Dull top-end and bloated low frequencies.	●	●		●							n/a
Panasonic SL-J910	170	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Sexy CD player that fits pleasingly into a frame when used with its own little speakers.	●	●		●							115
Panasonic SV-SR100	400	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine CD/MP3 that includes a hugely useful SD card slot for recording CDs within the unit.	●			●	●	●		●	●		30
Philips EXP5463	72	UMP3.05	★★★★☆	Looks different and the basic design is slick - sound is respectable rather than spectacular.	●	●		●	●						50
Sony D-NE720	85	UMP3.05	★★★★★	Delight to use and it sounds good - ATRAC 3Plus encoding proving particularly convincing.	●	●		●							45

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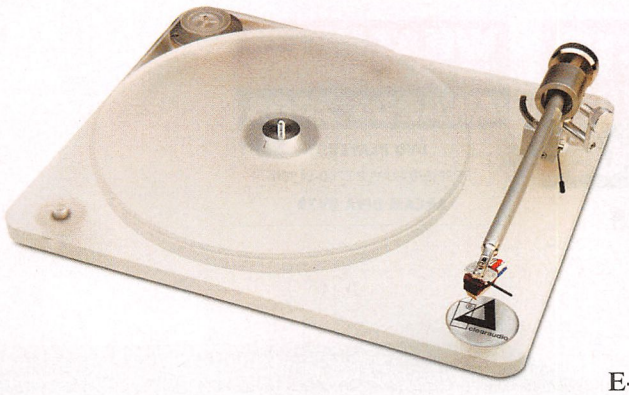

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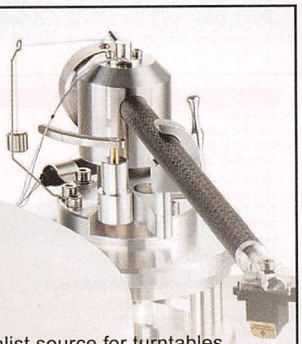

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chelsea@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
24 The Green, Ealing
0208 579 8777
ealing@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LONDON

Sevenoaks
144-148 Grays Inn Road, Holborn
0207 837 7540
holborn@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
77 Chase Side, Southgate,
0208 886 2777
southgate@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
21 Northways Pde, Finchley Road
0207 722 9777
swisscottage@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Superfi
2-4 Camden High Street, London
020 7388 1300

MANCHESTER

Sevenoaks
69 High Street, City Centre, Manchester
0161 831 7969
manchester@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Superfi
54 Bridge Street, Manchester
0161 835 1156

MERSEYSIDE

Pure Home Entertainment
68 Telegraph Road, Heswall, Wirral
Tel: 0151 342 9111
info@purewirral.co.uk

MIDDLESEX

Music Matters
344 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Pinner
0208 420 1925
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Sevenoaks
14 Thames Street
01784 460 777
staines@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

NORFOLK

Sevenoaks
129-29a St.Giles Street, Norwich
01603 767 565
norwich@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Sevenoaks
597-599 Mansfield Road, Sherwood, Nottingham
0115 911 2121
nottingham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Superfi
15 Market Street, Nottingham
0115 941 2137

OXFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
41 St.Clements Street, Oxford
01865 241 773
oxford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

Superfi
51-53 Piccadilly, Stoke
01782 265 010

SCOTLAND

Sevenoaks
57 Crown Street, Aberdeen
01224 252 797
aberdeen@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
5 The Grass Market, Edinburgh
0131 229 7267
edinburgh@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
88 Great Western Road, Glasgow
0141 332 9655
glasgow@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SURREY

Sevenoaks
32 The Boulevard, Crawley
01293 510 777
crawley@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
369-373 London Road, Croydon
0208 665 1203
croydon@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
12 Upper High Street, Epsom
01372 720 720
epsom@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SURREY

Sevenoaks
73b North Street, Guildford
01483 536 666
guildford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
43 Fife Road, Kingston
0208 547 0717
kingston@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Unilet
35 High Street, New Malden, KT3 4BY
0208 942 9567
www.unilet.net

Sevenoaks
43 Church Street, The Quadrant, Weybridge
01932 828 525
weybridge@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

TYNE AND WEAR

Sevenoaks
19 Newgate Street, Newcastle
0191 221 2320
newcastle@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WALES

Sevenoaks
104-106 Albany Road, Cardiff
02920 472 899
cardiff@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

Music Matters
363 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham
0121 429 2811
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Music Matters
93-95 Hobsmoat Road, Solihull
0121 742 0254
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Music Matters
10 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield
0121 354 2311
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Music Matters
9 Market Street, Stourbridge
01384 444 184
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Sevenoaks
29-30 Cleveland Street, Wolverhampton
01902 312 225
wolverhampton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
149-151 Stratford Road, Solihull
0121 733 3727
solihull@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sound Academy
152 High Street, Bloxwich, Walsall
01922 493 499
www.soundacademy.co.uk

Superfi
67 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham
0121 631 2675

WEST YORKSHIRE

Sevenoaks
62 North Street, Leeds
0113 245 2775
leeds@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
635 Queens Road, Heeley, Sheffield
0114 255 5861
sheffield@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Superfi
7 King Edward Street, Leeds
0113 244 9075

WILTSHIRE

Sevenoaks
8-9 Commercial Road, Swindon
01793 610 992
swindon@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

ACCESSORIES

ATACAMA EQUINOX RANGE

Atacama Audio

AVON

Sevenoaks
92b Whiteladies Road, Clifton
0117 974 3727
bristol@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
29-31 St Peters Street, Bedford
01234 272 779
bedford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

BERKSHIRE

Audio Venue
36 Queen Street, Maidenhead,Berkshire,SL6 1HZ
01628 633995
info@audiovenue.com

Sevenoaks
3-4 Kings Walk Shopping Centre, Reading
0118 959 7768
reading@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Technosound
8 Granville Square, Willen Local Centre,
Milton Keynes, MK15 9JL.
01908 604949
hifi@technosound.co.uk

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Sevenoaks
17 Burleigh Street, Cambridge
01223 304 770
cambridge@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
36-38 Park Road, Peterborough
01733 897 697
peterborough@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

CHESHIRE

Doug Brady
Kingsway Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington
01925 828009
doug.brady@dougbradyhifi.com

COUNTY DURHAM

Music Matters
17 Concisclisse Road, Darlington
01325 481 418
www.musicmatters.co.uk

DEVON

Sevenoaks
28 Cowick Street, Exeter
01392 218 895
exeter@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
107 Cornwall Street, Plymouth
01752 226 011
plymouth@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

DORSET

Sevenoaks
1 Latimer House, 44-46 High Street, Poole
01202 671 677
poole@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
14 Silver Street, Yeovil
01935 700 078
yeovil@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

EAST SUSSEX

Sevenoaks
57 Western Road, Hove
01273 733 338
brighton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

ESSEX

Sevenoaks
1 The Grove Centre, Witham
01376 501 733
witham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Sevenoaks
14 Pittville Street, Cheltenham
01242 241 171
cheltenham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE

Sevenoaks
33 London Road, Southampton
02380 337 770
southampton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
478 St.Albans Road, Watford
01923 213 533
watford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Ortons
6-8 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts
01462 452 248

HUMBERSIDE

Sevenoaks
1 Savile Row, Savile Street, Hull
01482 587 171
hull@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

INTERNET

HiFiBitZ
0870 0276 888
www.hifibitz.co.uk

Superfi
www.superfi.co.uk
search key "equinox"

KENT

Sevenoaks
39a East Street, Bromley
0208 290 1988
bromley@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
96 Week Street, Maidstone
01622 686 366
maidstone@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
109-113 London Road, Sevenoaks
01732 459 555
sevenoaks@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
28-30 St.Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells
01892 531 543
tunbridgewells@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LANCASHIRE

Sevenoaks
40-41 Lune Street, Preston
01772 825 777
preston@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LEICESTERSHIRE

Sevenoaks
10 Loseby Lane, Leicester
0116 253 6567
leicester@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

Sevenoaks
20-22 Corporation Street, Lincoln
01522 527 397
lincoln@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LONDON

Audio Venue
27 Bond Street,Ealing,London,W5 5AS
020 8567 8703
info@audiovenue.com

Oranges & Lemons
61-63 Webbs Road, London
020 7924 2043

Sevenoaks
403 Kings Road, Chelsea
0207 352 9466
chelsea@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LONDON

Sevenoaks
24 The Green, Ealing
0208 579 8777
ealing@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
144-148 Grays Inn Road, Holborn
0207 837 7540
holborn@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
77 Chase Side, Southgate,
0208 886 2777
southgate@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
21 Northways Pde, Finchley Road
0207 722 9777
swisscottage@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

MANCHESTER

Sevenoaks
69 High Street, City Centre, Manchester
0161 831 7969
manchester@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

MIDDLESEX

Music Matters
344 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Pinner
0208 420 1925
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Sevenoaks
14 Thames Street
01784 460 777
staines@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

NORFOLK

Sevenoaks
129-29a St.Giles Street, Norwich
01603 767 565
norwich@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Sevenoaks
597-599 Mansfield Road, Sherwood, Nottingham
0115 911 2121
nottingham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

OXFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
41 St.Clements Street, Oxford
01865 241 773
oxford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Sevenoaks
57 Crown Street, Aberdeen
01224 252 797
aberdeen@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
5 The Grass Market, Edinburgh
0131 229 7267
edinburgh@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
88 Great Western Road, Glasgow
0141 332 9655
glasgow@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SURREY

Sevenoaks
32 The Boulevard, Crawley
01293 510 777
crawley@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
369-373 London Road, Croydon
0208 665 1203
croydon@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
12 Upper High Street, Epsom
01372 720 720
epsom@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SURREY

Sevenoaks
73b North Street, Guildford
01483 536 666
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Sevenoaks
43 Fife Road, Kingston
0208 547 0717
kingston@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
43 Church Street, The Quadrant, Weybridge
01932 828 525
weybridge@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

TYNE AND WEAR

Sevenoaks
19 Newgate Street, Newcastle
0191 221 2320
newcastle@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WALES

Sevenoaks
104-106 Albany Road, Cardiff
02920 472 899
cardiff@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

Music Matters
363 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham
0121 429 2811
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Music Matters
93-95 Hobsmoat Road, Solihull
0121 742 0254
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Music Matters
10 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield
0121 354 2311
www.musicmatters.co.uk

Music Matters
9 Market Street, Stourbridge
01384 444 184
www.musicmatters.co.uk

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149-151 Stratford Road, Solihull
0121 733 3727
solihull@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
29-30 Cleveland Street, Wolverhampton
01902 312 225
wolverhampton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sound Academy
152 High Street, Bloxwich, Walsall
01922 493 499
www.soundacademy.co.uk

WEST YORKSHIRE

Sevenoaks
62 North Street, Leeds
0113 245 2775
leeds@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
635 Queens Road, Heeley, Sheffield
0114 255 5861
sheffield@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WILTSHIRE

Sevenoaks
8-9 Commercial Road, Swindon
01793 610 992
swindon@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

CD PLAYERS

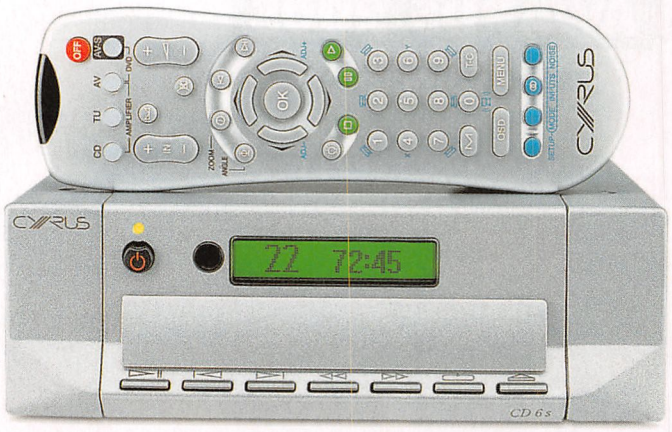
CYRUS CD6s

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

CD PLAYERS

BEST CD PLAYER £1000-£1500

CYRUS CD8x



CYRUS

Advanced Audio and Video Systems

AVON

Sevenoaks
92b Whiteladies Road, Clifton
0117 974 3727
bristol@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
29-31 St Peters Street, Bedford
01234 272 779
bedford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

BERKSHIRE

Sevenoaks
3-4 Kings Walk Shopping Centre, Reading
0118 959 7768
reading@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
17 Burleigh Street, Cambridge
01223 304 770
cambridge@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Sevenoaks
36-38 Park Road, Peterborough
01733 897 697
peterborough@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

CHESHIRE

Hi-Fi Stereo
51 Washway Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 7AB
0161 973 5577

DEVON

Sevenoaks
28 Cowick Street, Exeter
01392 218 895
exeter@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
107 Cornwall Street, Plymouth
01752 226 011
plymouth@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

DORSET

Sevenoaks
1 Latimer House, 44-46 High Street, Poole
01202 671 677
poole@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
14 Silver Street, Yeovil
01935 700 078
yeovil@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

EAST SUSSEX

Sevenoaks
57 Western Road, Hove
01273 733 338
brighton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

EAST YORKSHIRE

The Audio Room
2 George Street, Hedon, Hull, North Humberside
HU12 8JH
01482 891 375

ESSEX

Sevenoaks
1 The Grove Centre, Witham
01376 501 733
witham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Sevenoaks
14 Pittville Street, Cheltenham
01242 241 171
cheltenham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE

Sevenoaks
33 London Road, Southampton
02380 337 770
southampton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
478 St.Albans Road, Watford
01923 213 533
watford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

HUMBERSIDE

Sevenoaks
1 Savile Row, Savile Street, Hull
01482 587 171
hull@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

KENT

Sevenoaks
39a East Street, Bromley
0208 290 1988
bromley@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
96 Week Street, Maidstone
01622 686 366
maidstone@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
109-113 London Road, Sevenoaks
01732 459 555
sevenoaks@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
28-30 St.Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells
01892 531 543
tunbridgewells@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LANCASHIRE

Sevenoaks
40-41 Lune Street, Preston
01772 825 777
preston@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LEICESTERSHIRE

Sevenoaks
10 Loseby Lane, Leicester
0116 253 6567
leicester@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

Sevenoaks
20-22 Corporation Street, Lincoln
01522 527 397
lincoln@sevenoaksoundandvision.co.uk

LONDON

Sevenoaks
403 Kings Road, Chelsea
0207 352 9466
chelsea@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LONDON

Sevenoaks
24 The Green, Ealing
0208 579 8777
ealing@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
144-148 Grays Inn Road, Holborn
0207 837 7540
holborn@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
77 Chase Side, Southgate,
0208 886 2777
southgate@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
21 Northways Pde, Finchley Road
0207 722 9777
swisscottage@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

MANCHESTER

Sevenoaks
69 High Street, City Centre, Manchester
0161 831 7969
manchester@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

MIDDLESEX

Sevenoaks
14 Thames Street
01784 460 777
staines@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

NORFOLK

Sevenoaks
129-29a St.Giles Street, Norwich
01603 767 565
norwich@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Sevenoaks
597-599 Mansfield Road, Sherwood, Nottingham
0115 911 2121
nottingham@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

OXFORDSHIRE

Sevenoaks
41 St.Clements Street, Oxford
01865 241 773
oxford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Sevenoaks
57 Crown Street, Aberdeen
01224 252 797
aberdeen@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
5 The Grass Market, Edinburgh
0131 229 7267
edinburgh@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
88 Great Western Road, Glasgow
0141 332 9655
glasgow@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

SURREY

Sevenoaks
32 The Boulevard, Crawley
01293 510 777
crawley@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
369-373 London Road, Croydon
0208 665 1203
croydon@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
12 Upper High Street, Epsom
01372 720 720
epsom@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
73b North Street, Guildford
01483 536 666
guildford@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
43 Fife Road, Kingston
0208 547 0717
kingston@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
43 Church Street, The Quadrant, Weybridge
01932 828 525
weybridge@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

TYNE AND WEAR

Sevenoaks
19 Newgate Street, Newcastle
0191 221 2320
newcastle@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WALES

Sevenoaks
104-106 Albany Road, Cardiff
02920 472 899
cardiff@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

Sevenoaks
149-151 Stratford Road, Solihull
0121 733 3727
solihull@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
29-30 Cleveland Street, Wolverhampton
01902 312 225
wolverhampton@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WEST YORKSHIRE

Sevenoaks
62 North Street, Leeds
0113 245 2775
leeds@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

Sevenoaks
635 Queens Road, Heeley, Sheffield
0114 255 5861
sheffield@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WILTSHIRE

Sevenoaks
8-9 Commercial Road, Swindon
01793 610 992
swindon@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

STEREO SPEAKERS

BEST STEREO SPEAKERS £1000-£1500

PROAC STUDIO 140

ProAc
perfectly natural

AVON

Audio Excellence
65 Park Street, Bristol
0117 926 4975
bristol@audio-excellence.co.uk

Paul Green Hi-Fi
Unit 8 Brassmill Lane Enterprise Centre, Brassmill Lane, Bath
01225 316 197
www.paulgreenhifi.co.uk

BERKSHIRE

Audio Venue
36 Queen Street, Maidenhead
01628 633 995
info@audio-venue.co.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Noteworthy Audio
36 Buckingham Street, Aylesbury
01296 422 224
info@noteworthyaudio.co.uk

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Audio File
18c-18d Chesterton Road, Cambridge
01223 368 305
sstreater@aol.com

CHESHIRE

Audio Excellence
86-90 Broughton Road, Chester
01244 345 576
chester@audio-excellence.co.uk

Doug Brady Hi-Fi
Kingsway Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington
01925 828 009
doug.brady@dougbradyhifi.com

DEVON

Audio Excellence
156 Sidwell Street, Exeter
01392 491 194
exeter@audio-excellence.co.uk

DORSET

Movement Audio
926 Wimborne Road, Bournemouth
01202 529 988
moor@movement-audio.co.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Audio T
38 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham
01242 583 960
cheltenham@audio-t.co.uk

GREATER MANCHESTER

Practical Hi-Fi
65 Bridge Street, Manchester
0161 839 8869
info@practicalhi-fi.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE

Audio T
2 Feathers Lane, Basingstoke
01256 324 311
basingstoke@audio-t.co.uk

HUMBERSIDE

The Audio Room
2 George Street, Hedon, Hull, HU12 8JH
01482 891 375
hifi@theaudioroom.co.uk

KENT

Musical Images
126 High Street, Beckenham
0208 663 3777
sales@musical-images.co.uk

Progressive Audio
2 Maryland Court, Rainham
01634 389 004
dave@progressiveaudio.co.uk

LANCASHIRE

Practical Hi-Fi
84 Penny Street, Lancaster
01524 396 57
info@practicalhi-fi.co.uk

Practical Hi-Fi
43 Friargate, Preston
01772 883 958
info@practicalhi-fi.co.uk

LEICESTERSHIRE

Divine Audio
The Courtyard, Bennett's Place, High Street, Market Harborough
01858 432 999
post@divineaudio.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

Sevenoaks
20-22 Corporation Street, Lincoln
01522 527 397
lincoln@sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

LONDON

Audio T
190 West End Lane, West Hampstead
0207 7944 7848
hampstead@audio-t.co.uk

Audio Venue
27 Bond Street, Ealing, London
0208 567 8703
w5@audiovenue.com

Billy Vee Sound Systems
248 Lee High Road, Lewisham
0208 318 5755
sales@billyvee.co.uk

Homescape AV
Hammersmith, London
0207 565 2979
joseph.gallart@ntlworld.com

K J West One
26 New Cavendish Street
0207 486 8262/3
info@kjwestone.com

Musical Images
18 Monmouth Street, Covent Garden
0207 497 1346
sales@musical-images.co.uk

LONDON

The Audio Visual Lounge
14 Hanbury Street, London
0207 375 3691
info@theavlounge.com

The Listening Rooms
161 Old Brompton Road
0207 244 7750
info@thelisteningrooms.com

MIDDLESEX

Audio T
159A Chase Side, Enfield
0208 367 3132
enfield@audio-t.co.uk

Harrow Audio
27 Springfield Road, Harrow
0870 800 4434
sales@harrowaudio.com

NORFOLK

Basically Sound
The Old School, School Road,Norwich
01508 570 829
graham@falcon-acoustics.co.uk

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Huddersfield Hi-Fi
3-5 King Cross Street, Halifax, HX1 2SH
01422 366 832
halifax@huddersfieldhifi.freeserve.co.uk

Vickers Hi-Fi
24 Gilygate, York, YO31 7EQ
01904 629 659
david@vickers-hifi.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

Moore's Hi-Fi
62 Frances Street, Newtownards
0289 181 2417

OXFORDSHIRE

Audio T
19 Old High Street, Headington, Oxford
01865 765 961
oxford@audio-t.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Loud & Clear
520 St Vincent Street, Finnieston, Glasgow
0141 221 0221
info@loud-clear.co.uk

Loud & Clear
26 Hamilton Place, Edinburgh
0131 226 6500
info@loud-clear.co.uk

SCOTLAND

The Audio Salon
4 Park Circus, Glasgow
0141 333 9700
jack@audiosalon.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE

SMC Sound and Vision
St Michaels Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2ES
01743 232 065
sales@smcsoundandvision.co.uk

SURREY

P.J. Hi-Fi
3 Bridge Street, Guildford, GU1 4RY
01483 504 801
info@pjhifi.co.uk

Unilet Sound and Vision
35 High Street, New Malden, KT3 4BY
0208 942 9567
sales@unilet.net

SUSSEX

Audio Designs
26 High Street, East Grinstead, RH19 3AS
01342 314 569
sales@audiodesigns.co.uk

Audio Designs
7-9 Park Place, Horsham, RH12 1DF
01403 252 255
sales@audiodesigns.co.uk

The Power Plant
40 Church Plant, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 2FN
01273 775 978
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RADIOS

PURE EVOKE-2XT

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BEST DIGITAL VIDEO CABLE
QED QUNEX HDMI-P

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CABLES
BEST COMPONENT VIDEO CABLE
QED QUNEX P-CV1

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CABLES
BEST TV AERIAL CABLE
QED QUNEX TTV

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BEST SCART CABLE
QED SQART P2110

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doug.brady@dougbradyhifi.com

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0161 973 5577

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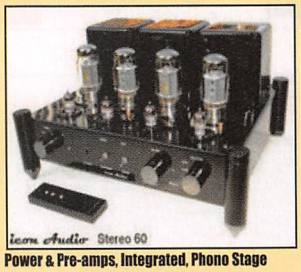
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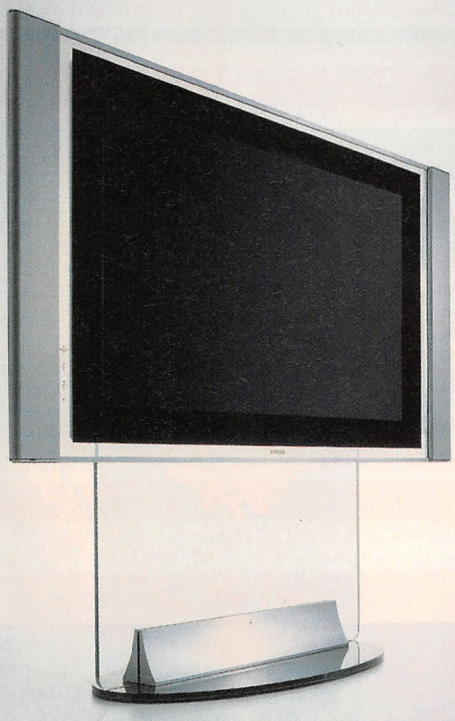

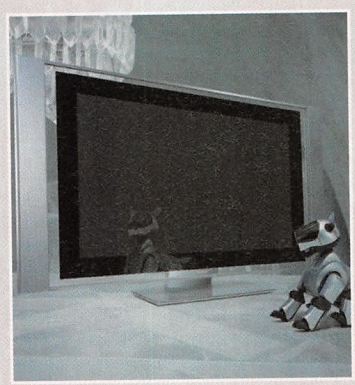

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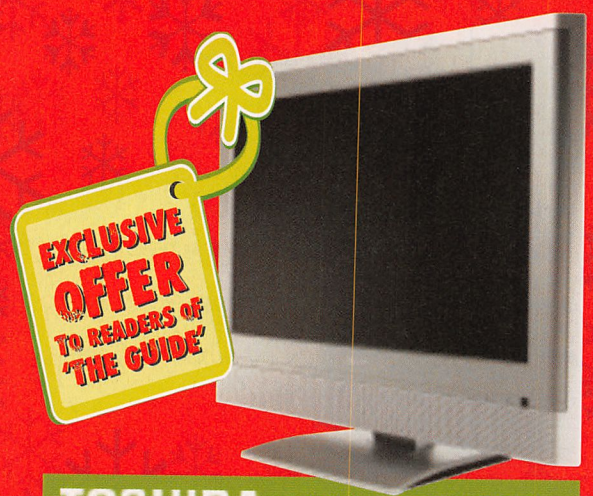

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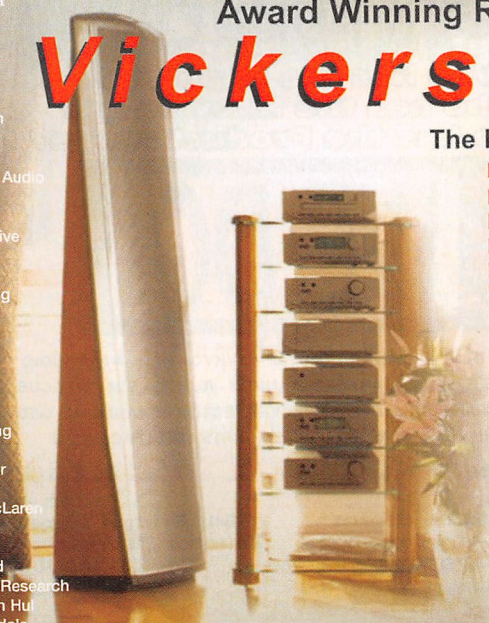

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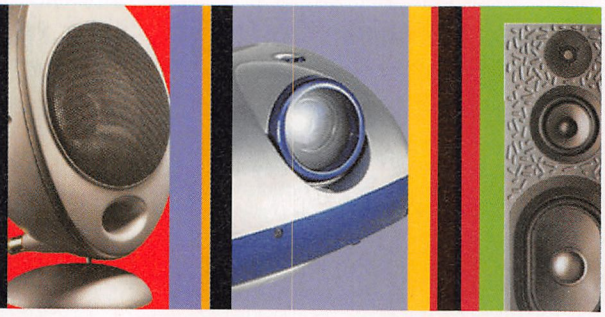

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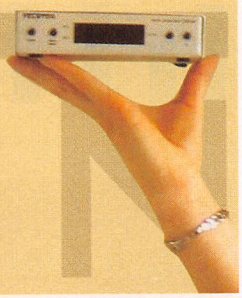

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JARGON BUSTER

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pXX Find more detail in the reviews on these pages...

p40

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A

AAC Compressed audio format popularised by Apple. Sounds better than MP3, though less products can play or handle it.
ANALOGUE The old-fashioned way of storing audio data, as used by VHS tapes, LPs and cassettes to store video or audio. (See Digital)
ANAMORPHIC Some DVDs offer an improved picture on widescreen TVs, banishing the so-called letterbox effect.
APPLE LOSSLESS This new audio compression format from Apple loses little quality over standard CD sound, but files are half the size.
p40 **ASPECT RATIO** The proportions of a screen or image – a ratio of height and width. (see Widescreen)

B

BASS Low frequency sounds, which are hard to reproduce.
BASS REFLEX A speaker design using air-flow from a port in the cabinet to help deliver extended bass reproduction.
BIAMPING Each drive unit of a speaker is driven by a separate amp channel, so a pair of two-way speakers needs two stereo amps and two runs of cable to each speaker. (See Biwiring)
BINDING POST The terminal round the back of a speaker. It has a threaded collar for gripping bare wires and sometimes a socket that takes banana plugs, too.
BIT A single piece of digital information, basically an 'on/off' signal. (see DAC)
BIWIRING Gives some of the benefits of biamping, but at lower cost. You need suitable speakers (with two sets of inputs and a split crossover), then send twin runs of cable from the amp (again if suitable) to each speaker.
p50 **BIT-RATE** The quality of an audio or video file, measured in kilobits per second (see Kbps)
BLU-RAY One of two rival formats aiming to provide a higher-quality successor to DVD. See also HD-DVD.

C

CARTRIDGE The device that plays a record. It converts the wobbles in the record's groove into electrical signals for your amp – either moving-magnet or moving-coil.
CD-R/-RW CD-Rs are record-once discs, while CD-RWs can be used many times.
COAXIAL One of the two types of digital audio connector. Offers a slightly better performance than optical, except when extremely long lengths of cable are used.
COLORATION This is a shift away from the natural rendition of the music. Coloration is undesirable 'boomy' bass, a 'nasal' midband or 'splashy' treble.
p40 **COMPONENT** Superior to Scart, S-Video or composite, component cables carry video from a source (eg, DVD player) to a display (TV or projector). The cables use three coloured leads.
COMPOSITE The weakest of the video-only connections.
COMPRESSION (1) When talking about data, compression is the process of squeezing files to make them smaller, sometimes, as with MP3, by discarding some of the musical information to make the files more practical. (see Bit-rate)
COMPRESSION (2) Used by radio stations to reduce level differences between loud and soft parts of music.
p102 **CROSSOVER** The circuit inside loudspeakers that splits the incoming signal, sending the high frequencies to the tweeter and the low ones to the low-frequency woofer.
CRT Cathode Ray Tube. The technology behind conventional televisions and large, high-end video projectors. Three colour tubes – one red, one green and one blue – are 'converged' to create an image on the screen.

D

p70 **DAB** Digital Audio Broadcasting: digital radio on BBC and independent stations. Can offer a better-quality, hiss-free sound.
DAC Digital-to-analogue converters (DACs) turn strings of bits into audio. CD players, MP3 players and AV processors all contain DACs. Standalone units also exist.
DECIBEL (dB) Measures sound pressure. A change of 1dB is just about audible, while +10dB sounds like the level has been doubled.
DECODING DVD soundtracks usually include multichannel audio in a certain format (see Dolby and DTS). You need a processor or AV amplifier to decode this info and pass it to multichannel speakers.
DIGITAL Digital data is stored in bits – as numbers that can be transferred with very little degradation in quality. Most modern hi-fi and AV components process digital data in the quest for the best audio and video performance.
DLP Digital light processing is a projector technology that's usually superior to rival LCD.
DOCK Can be as simple as a socket for your MP3 player that then connects to your computer – otherwise, it might include speakers.
DOLBY One of the two companies that creates the multichannel soundtracks for films, which eventually get transferred to DVD. There are many formats, some of which are more advanced that others – for example, Dolby Digital and Dolby Digital Surround EX. (See DTS)
DTS Like Dolby (see above), DTS encodes DVD soundtracks for playback on compatible AV receivers.
DVD-A High-resolution audio format that offers multichannel surround music and 24-bit/96kHz stereo.
DVD or DVD-VIDEO Video on CD-sized discs – have huge capacity for movies, with widescreen and multichannel surround sound.
DVD-R/-RW The most widely used recordable DVD format. DVD-R recordings can't be erased, but DVD-RW discs are re-usable.
DVD+R/+RW Developed by Philips, this is a DVD recording format with similar properties to DVD-R/-RW, but not fully compatible.
DVD-RAM The third recordable DVD format. Includes a 'time-slip' function, so you can watch the start of a TV show while recording the rest.
DVI-D A high-quality digital connection for DVD players and displays, which carries a video signal without ever converting it to analogue.
DYNAMIC RANGE The range, in decibels, between the largest and smallest audio signals reproduced by hi-fi. Classical music often has large variations in loudness.

F

FIREWIRE Ultra-fast data connection used by MP3 players, computers and high-end home cinema equipment
FLOORSTANDER A type of taller speaker that stands directly on the floor (sometimes on built-in spikes).
FREEVIEW There are 30+ channels available for free using a normal aerial if you have a set-top box.
FREQUENCY High-pitched sounds have high frequency, whereas low-pitched ones have a low frequency. Audible sounds range from about 16Hz to 20kHz.

H

p84 **HARD DISK** A machine for storing large quanities of data. Hard disks first appeared in computers, and are now found in MP3 players (for audio and photos), set-top boxes and DVD recorders (for video and audio), and network music servers (for audio).
HDCD means High Definition Compatible Digital – a coding system for compact disc that aims to get better sound. Needs a CD player fitted with a suitable decoder.
HD-DVD Competing with Blu-ray to be high-def format that eventually replaces DVD.
HDMI A high-quality digital connection going from DVD players to displays – competing with – and superior to – DVI-D.
p40 **HD-READY** Label on any TV that's able to show High Definition broadcasts.
HERTZ (Hz) Unit of frequency. One Hz means a signal has one cycle per second.
HIGH DEFINITION The next generation of TV broadcasts has a much better quality picture. Already popular in the USA and Japan, it's expected that BSkyB will be the first major broadcaster to transmit High-Def pictures in 2006. Requires a TV with at least 720 horizontal lines, and a certain standard of DVI or HDMI digital connector.
HORN-LOADED A method of improving the efficiency of a loudspeaker, by adding a structure like a horn.

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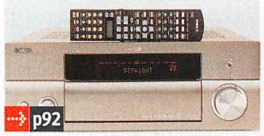
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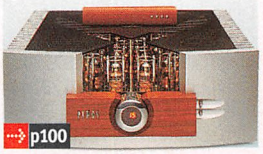
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I

p102 **IMPEDANCE** A low impedance draws a high current flow from the source, while a high impedance draws a little. Speakers with a low impedance are more difficult for an amp to drive.

K

KBPS Kilobits per second. This is either a transfer rate – how fast data can be piped down a cable – or, more commonly, it's a compression rate: how much data has been retained when a music track (for example, an MP3) has been compressed. A higher figure means faster data flow and better-quality sound.

L

LCD Along with plasma, LCD is the main flatscreen TV technology. LCD is the dominant type for sets with screens under 37in, though larger sets are becoming available. Picture quality is improving, too. Similar technology is used for cheaper projectors.
LINE LEVEL Describes inputs that don't need amplifying before the amp can use them.

M

MEDIA CENTER When installed on a suitable PC, this piece of Microsoft software allows you to run your computer as a home-entertainment system – with TV tuning, hard-disk recording, DVD playback, and more.
MEMORY CARD A small plastic card that fits in electronic devices – from portable players to TVs, DVD recorders and video camera. It's possible to record audio, video or images onto the card and transfer data to or play it back on another compatible device or computer.
MIDRANGE The frequency range where most of the instruments and voices are heard. It must be of a high quality if singers, guitars, trumpets, and so on, are to sound natural.
MONOBLOC An independent mono power amplifier – so two monoblocs are required to run in a stereo system.
p82 **MP3** MPEG 1 Layer 3. The compression system used for downloading music files from the internet to a PC or MP3 player. It can reduce file sizes by a factor of 10 to enable faster downloads, though compressing files less means better quality.

N

p82 **NETWORK SERVER** Stores tracks from a large number of CDs (sometimes as MP3 files) and can pipe them around your home.
NETWORK PLAYER Attaches to either a router or a network music server, and allows you to access music files that might be stored elsewhere. Sometimes called a 'client'.
NTSC The North American system of TV broadcasting. Not always compatible with the European PAL system.

O

p102 **OHM** A unit of electrical resistance to current. The lower the figure, the harder a speaker is to drive; so the higher, the easier the speaker is to drive.
OPTICAL A digital audio connector. (See Coaxial)

P

PAL The European system of TV broadcasting. (see NTSC)
PHONO STAGE Turntables' cartridges output signals at much lower levels than CD players, so need extra amplification (a phono stage). Many amps have ones built-in, but you can also buy dedicated phono amps.
PLASMA A type of large, flatscreen television – these sets are available up to 60in. Sizes go down to 37in, where they compete with LCD televisions directly.
POWER AMPLIFIER Supplies audio signals from the source component to the speakers.
POWER-HANDLING The highest safe power for speakers. Note, it's easier to damage speakers with an amp of too low power driven hard, than with too much.
PREAMPLIFIER The control part of an amp. Built into integrated amps, but can be separate and used with a power amp or active loudspeakers.
PRO-LOGIC (See below)
p92 **PROCESSING MODES** Some AV amps and processors create multichannel soundtracks from stereo by creating the sound for the rear channels. Dolby Pro-Logic is one of them.
PROGRESSIVE SCAN Creates DVD pictures in one hit. Gives clearer, flicker-free images than the conventional system, which uses interlaced, rapidly refreshed horizontal lines.

R

RDS Radio Data System. Data piggybacked on FM radio allowing RDS tuners to display the names of stations, and perform a range of functions, such giving you up-to-the-minute traffic reports.
REAR-PROJECTION TV A projector housed behind a screen in a large box – these TVs can give huge pictures, are less bulky than CRTs, and can offer excellent value.
ROUTER The part of a network that forms the hub to which all the computers are joined. Many have modems built-in, allowing many computers to share a single broadband internet connection.

S

SCART Scart cables can be video-and-audio, or video-only. The most commonly used AV connection, notable for its large, rectangular terminals. Not as good quality as component or digital.
SD CARD Type of memory card
SIX-CHANNEL INPUT Many DVD players now have built-in Dolby Digital decoders. To take advantage of these they need to be connected to a home cinema receiver with a six-channel input.
SUBWOOFER Separate woofer box making deep bass – the 'point 1' in a 5.1 system.
p90 **STANDMOUNT** A type of speaker typified by its compact dimensions. Sits on a dedicated support for the best sound. Often superior to similarly priced floorstanders in many areas, but less bass.
SUPER AUDIO CD (SACD) Developed by Sony and Philips, SACD uses one-bit Direct Stream Digital (DSD) technology. Most discs are dual-layer, with a CD layer that'll play on a normal CD player and an SACD layer for better performance when replayed on an SACD player.

T

TAPE LOOP Two sockets on an amplifier that let the signal out for tape-deck recording; there's another pair that let the signal back in for replay. So you can record and check recordings.
TONEARM The device on a turntable that holds the cartridge in place. Not all decks are supplied with one.
THROW RATIO Never buy a projector without making sure it'll fit in your room. First decide what size screen you want. Then measure the distance your new projector will be from the screen. Finally, use the throw ratio to work out if the projector is suitable. You'll find more details in the manual.
THX Developed by LucasFilm, a set of standards for Dolby Pro-Logic gear that should ensure a certain quality of home cinema sound.
TONEARM The part of a turntable that guides the needle on the record.
TRANSIENTS Short and sudden events in music such as a cymbal crash or the crack of a stick on a snare drum. Can be difficult to reproduce.
TREBLE High frequencies. When we say treble is 'splashy', it means that cymbals, for example, sound like they're going 'tizzshsh', rather than having a sting and a crispness to them.
TWEETER The small speaker driver that handles treble.

U

USB Another type of data connection (see FireWire), originally used only on computers, but now commonly used with MP3 players and other hi-fi and home cinema products. USB 2.0 replaces the slower 1.1.

V

p100 **VALVE** Amplifying device using electrodes in a glass vacuum tube. Gives a warm, seductive sound.

W

WATT More watts mean more power, but system loudness depends on loudspeaker sensitivity and room size.
WIDESCREEN More and more TV programmes, and nearly all DVD discs, are in widescreen format. This can vary from 14:9 (a compromise ratio used by TV broadcasters) to 16:9, which is the ratio used on widescreen television sets and by most DVDs. Many films shown at the cinema are in 21:9, so you'll still get black bars on a widescreen television. Old-fashioned 'square' TVs use a 4:3 size. (see Aspect Ratio)
WI-FI A system for connecting computer and hi-fi components without any cables.
WMA Windows Media Audio is a rival format to MP3. It claims to be able to compress files twice as effectively as MP3, keeping files smaller.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision (incorporating VTV, Audiophile, Hi-Fi Answers, High Fidelity, Which Hi-Fi?, DVD, What CD? & What MP3?) is published by Haymarket Consumer Publications Ltd, a subsidiary of Haymarket Magazines Ltd. EWA, 205 US Highway 22, Green Brook, NJ 08812. Tel 732 424 7811, Fax 732 424 7814, email *ewa@ewacars.com*. Periodicals Postage paid at Berkely Heights NJ 07922 and additional mailing offices. Send address changes to What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision c/o EWA at the address above **EDITORIAL DIRECTOR** Mel Nichols **DESIGN DIRECTOR** Paul Harpin **CHAIRMAN** Eric Verdon-Roe. **JANUARY 2006 ISSUE** On sale Thursday, 15th December 2005. ISSN 0309 333. What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ® USPS 002-544 is a registered trademark of Haymarket Magazines Ltd and is published 13 times a year under licence from Haymarket Magazines Ltd. We take every care when compiling the contents of this magazine, but can assume no responsibility for any effects arising there from. Manuscripts are submitted entirely at owners' risk. Advertisements are accepted by us in good faith as correct at the time of going to press. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher.© 2005 Haymarket Magazines Ltd, all rights reserved.**CIRCULATION TRADE ENQUIRIES** Frontline Ltd, Park House, Park Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 2TR (01733) 555161. **FREE MEDIA** Colour Systems **PRINTING** Wyndeham Heron **BACK ISSUES** £4.99 from What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, Haymarket Subscriptions, PO Box 568, Haywards Heath, RH16 3XQ. Call (08456) 777813 for availability **SUBSCRIPTIONS** What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, Freepost SEA 14713, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3BR **SUBSCRIPTIONS HOTLINE & BACK ISSUE REQUESTS** 08456 777813 **SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES** 13 issues including postage: UK £45.50; Europe/Eire £74. Airmail: Middle East, Canada, Africa, India £115 **ABC CIRCULATION** (Jan-Dec 2004) 67,531

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